



Saijaku Muhai no Bahamut

vol.5

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ヤマトノカミ
そして《夜刀ノ神》の神装——
スペシャルコード
《禁呪符号》

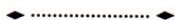
夜架の持つ魔眼の戦技——

こくげき

『刻撃』

C O N T E N T S

P005 Prologue 少女の本懐



P009 Episode1 帝国の凶刃

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P330 Epilogue 帝国の在処

UNDEFEATED
BAHAMUT
CHRONICLE





リーズシャルテ・
アティスマータ



World

【装甲機電】(ドラグライド)

遺跡から発掘された、古代兵器。
その中でも希少種であり、高い性能を持つものは、神装機電と呼ばれる。
また、装甲機電の使い手は、機電使い(ドラグナイト)と呼ばれる。

【遺跡】(ハイルツ)

世界に七つ発見された古代遺跡。装甲機電(ドラグライド)が発掘されたため、
国力を左右する重要な存在として、各国間で縄張り争いが起きている。

【幻獣】(アビス)

遺跡から現れる謎の幻獣。人類の脅威であり、機電使いのみが対抗できる。

【発掘機電】(ラクダレク)

ひとつの遺跡に対し一匹のみ存在するという、超常の力を秘めた七匹の幻神獣。

【装甲機電】

正体不明の装甲機電(ドラグライド)を使い、たった1機で帝国の装甲機電
の約1200機を倒したと言われる伝説の英雄。

【アティスマータ家】(アティ)

リーズシャルテの父であるアティスマータ伯が、アーカディア帝国に対して
行ったクーデターによって、五年前に建国された国。

【アーカディア王国】

世界の五分の一を束ねていた大国。世界最強と謳われた、圧倒的な軍勢力を背景
に圧政を敷いていたが、クーデターによって滅ぼされた。
ルクスとアイリは、この帝国の皇族の生き残り。

【ヘイブルグ共和国】

近隣の強国。アティスマータ新王国との対立関係が表面化している。

Character

【ルクス・アーカディア】

滅亡したアーカディア帝国の王子。
「無敗の最期」と呼ばれる機電使い。

【リーズシャルテ・アティスマータ】

アティスマータ新王国の王女。朱の戦姫と呼ばれる。
神装機電(ティアマト)の使い手。

【フィルフィ・アイングラム】

アイングラム財閥の次女。ルクスの幼馴染で学園長の妹。
神装機電(チューボーン)の使い手。

【クリルジファー・エインフォルク】

北の大国、ユミル教国からの留学生であるクラスメイト。
神装機電(クファアニール)の使い手。

【アイリ・アニアディア】

旧帝国の皇族の生き残り。
一年生で、ルクスの実の妹。

【セリス・デ・ア・セラルリス】

「騎士団」の団長である三年生。学園最強と言われている。
四大貴族の公爵家令嬢で、男嫌いとして有名。

【ヘイス】

各国で闇商人と呼ばれる恐れられていた人物。
現在はヘイブルグ共和国で軍師をしているらしい。

【レリィ・アイングラム】

王立士官学園の学園長。フィルフィの姉。



Prologue: The Girl's Long-cherished Desire

Habakiri Yoruka who was born as the princess of Ancient City killed a person at the mere age of five.

Her opponent was an assassin hired by a noble's mistress.

She dodged the black clothed man's swung blade and stabbed a single bamboo skewer in his throat, ending his life.

Assassination, murder, stealth elimination.

In the Habakiri Castle□□the royal family, the central figure of Ancient City, was in a state of utter turmoil and unrest.

□□However, the reason why Yoruka was rejected by everyone around her was not due to her continued murder, but because she struck down every single assassin sent after her all by herself.

'You □□.....Someone like you is not a person!'

Yoruka smiled with a chuckle and suddenly opened her eyes in the darkness.

Even though she couldn't remember her father's face in the slightest, for some reason only his frightened words remained in the girl's memory forever.

Possessing an imperturbable heart ready to harm and kill without a shred of hesitation.

And an unusual talent for battle far removed from the realm of nature.

Yoruka attained full mastery of martial arts from the swordsmanship instructor and was feared by everyone in the castle. On her ninth birthday, she received the unspeakable

name'Kirihome'.

Two years later. Yoruka joined the Arcadia Empire after the war where they started invading Ancient City.

She made a single contract and pledged loyalty to the emperor.

That Arcadia Empire was also destroyed□□but, the imperial blood had yet to die out.

□□And now. Yoruka broke into a shallow smile while looking at the silver haired boy in front of her.

It was rather unexpected for Yoruka to harbour such strong feelings towards others.

Yoruka has no concerns or attachments whatsoever, hence her imperturbable heart. Having such a strong interest for that boy was probably a first to her.

†

"Mmm....."

Lux slightly opened his eyes as he roused from deep slumber.

While his body still seemed listless from sleep a girl's white bare body entered his view.

(Is this□□a dream.....?)

Amidst the midnight air. An unfamiliar figure was visible in the infirmary scenery dimly lit by a lamp.

There was a half-naked girl clad in an unravelled black kimono straddling the sleeping Lux.

Lux's heart started pounding audibly at the refreshing feeling of her plump thighs and swelling breasts, which kept their beautiful shape while pressing on him, such a well-proportioned body reminded someone of an exquisitely crafted piece of silverwork.

"I could meet you at last. Aruji-sama□□"



A beautiful girl with eyes of different colour and long glossy black hair muttered so in a somewhat feverish voice as her fingers caressed Lux's chest.

"Ah....."

The sweet scent of a girl faintly tickled Lux's nose sending shivers down his spine.

"It seems you are rather tired Aruji-sama. Tonight, it's enough just to be able to come and see you"

The girl's presence suddenly started to dwindle and her figure dimmed in the darkness.

"Look forward to it, Aruji-sama. I'll show you how I take back the Arcadia Empire with my own hands□□without fail"

The girl disappeared leaving only those words behind.

Like that the night at Cross Field came to an end with no one aware of their meeting.

Chapter 1: The Empire's Assassin Blade

Part 1

On that day Lux was sleeping in the infirmary office too when a sudden clamor arose.

"Lux! I remodelled the previous 《Chimeratech Wyvern》 to make you a nursing Drag-Ride! With this the toilet and bathing will be child's play□□probably!"

"Isn't that quite dangerous instead!? Or rather, I'm probably the one testing it aren't I!?"

Faced with Lisha's innocent smile Lux refused in panic.

Krulcifer who saw it directed an amazed gaze to Lisha from the side.

"As usual you are wasting your talent needlessly, are you not..... In the first place, there is no need to take such a dangerous approach, you could easily take care of Lux-kun's bath if you just wear the water dress you bought last time"

"T-There was that way too! I mean, why are you here!? Today is not your turn, is it!? I'm already taking care of Lux!"

"I am merely coming here to teach him today's lesson that he missed while he slept. Though I will obediently leave if you can do that in my place though?"

Fort City Cross Field, a white room in the first block inside the academy.

Right next to the sleeping Lux's bed two girls were quarreling.

One was the young princess of this New Atismata Kingdom,

Lizsharte.

The other was Krulcifer, an exchange student and daughter of a count from the religious country Ymir.

Lisha was a lovely princess with scarlet eyes and long blonde hair tied in a ponytail to the side, a girl full of energy with a strong will despite her petite body.

Krulcifer was a beautiful girl with long flowing bluish hair and white porcelain skin, a talented woman possessing unparalleled ability in both literary and military arts and the grace befitting a noble's daughter.

Lux was overjoyed that such girls frequently come to visit, but□□.

(Why does it always turn this way.....)

Lux was breaking out in a cold sweat while looking at the two girls before him.

One week after completing the training camp in Ries Island there would be a tournament in the capital□□the'All-Dragon Battle'. But he had yet to fully recover.

Even after waking up from a long sleep he couldn't move his body as he pleased due to the recoil from using Over Limit, a function to remove the Drag-Ride limiter.

In order to relieve his still aching muscles of the strenuous fatigue, he was staying in the academy's infirmary office.

Until the day of the tournament in the capital light exercise was forbidden, not to mention Drag-Ride practice.

Such were the conditions imposed on Lux by the doctor after finishing his examination.

"I do not mind the both of you enjoying yourselves with Nii-san, but be a little quiet please. Did you forget that we are in the infirmary office?"

Such an exasperated murmur suddenly came from the nearby chair.

Airi Arcadia□□Lux's little sister sharing the same hair and eye color directed her gaze to them with a book in hand.

"Muu, can't be helped then. I guess it's fine if the little sister is here.....I'll come back again later"

"□□It really can't be helped. I will take my leave for today too. Let's work hard with the supplementary lessons next time"

Lisha stood up and left the room with Krulcifer in tow.

Only Lux and Airi were left in the infirmary office bathed in the early summer afternoon glow.

"Fuu.....even so, lately Lisha-sama and Krulcifer-san seem kind of scary. I wonder what's going on?"

"It's all because of Nii-san that those two are so worked up though"

"Huh?"

Lux tilted his head to one side at Airi's brief comment.

"Having no self-awareness is a poor taste"

She murmured so in a small voice with her gaze still on the book in her hands.

Speaking of which, he got the feeling that Krulcifer became more aggressive than before after he told everyone that he would be Lisha's knight□□Could it be, it was related to that?

(.....It can't be, right?)

Lux took a deep breath to sort out his feelings while looking out the window.

For the time being, let's focus on the things right before himself.

Fight for the right to investigate the ruins at the tournament in the capital.

In truth, Lux also wanted to train in order to get the overall victory in the upcoming All-Dragon Battle that would be held in the capital but□□.

"By the way, according to my calculations your operational limit is about 12 minutes"

"12 minutes?"

Lux showed a doubt at this sudden murmur, to which Airi nodded while lowering her gaze.

"That is the time Nii-san will be able to use 《Bahamut》 until the All-Dragon Battle is over, the armor will be forcibly disengaged if you use it beyond that. But this is still a numerical value obtained after running calculations with the operational data up to now, it will change somewhat depending on how you use your weapons. If you use a 《Wyvern》 you could manage to a certain extend□□"

"I only have, that little time?"

He was already prepared to some extent for the lingering fatigue from the recoil of using Over Limit, but as expected it was harsh.

He wouldn't use 《Bahamut》 in the upcoming matches anyway, but still□□.

Thump! Airi closed her book audibly and flashed a cool smile to Lux.

"This is as much as I'll compromise. In reality, Nii-san's wounds are at a level where he should refrain from participating in the All-Dragon Battle right?"

"I-I understand, my bad....."

Airi stood up with a sigh when Lux apologized immediately after sensing danger.

"Besides□□the current Nii-san has a higher possibility of running into something even more dangerous"

"Yeah. I know, Hayes and Nii-san□□right?"

Hayes, the Black Marketer, and the military strategist of the Heiburg Republic.

And Fugil, an enemy of the old empire whom Lux had pursued for years.

Heiburg had continually attacked the New Kingdom time after time, against such an opponent Lux and the others definitely couldn't let their guard down during the All-Dragon Battle.

"Actually, that's not the only thing though"

"Eh?"

"No□□it's nothing. I'll tell Nii-san when you get a little better"

Airi left the room after Lux tilted his head at her meaningful words.

Once the infirmary office returned to silence, Lux recalled the girls' faces.

It was hard to notice because both Lisha and Krulcifer put their appearance in order first before coming here, but he noticed.

They were actually going through some intense practice under the scorching sun, pushing themselves until they were out of breath.

They would never say it, after all, the reason why they were going so far during training was to prevent Lux from carrying all the burden alone.

"We have to win□□Absolutely"

Lux clenched his fists tightly and renewed his determination.

For the sake of Philuffy and Lisha, whom he vowed to become

her knight.

Part 2

The cries of cicadas and midsummer heat permeated inside the classroom through the fully opened windows.

Two days later. After a long stay in the infirmary office, Lux finally showed up in the classroom fully rested.

Today is the second day of attendance set in a row.

Many students in the dormitory were going back home during summer vacation so half of the seats in class re empty, but still, entering the classroom after a long time felt somewhat nostalgic.

"Hi! Congratulations on your full recovery Lux-chi!"

When he got to his seat for the first time since he came back from the training camp, he was surrounded by all the girls in class led by Tillfur of the Triad.

"Thanks for the hard work! I got worried when I heard you collapsed~"

"How was the training camp? Did anything fun happen□□"

"I missed you~. I didn't go back home this year so I was bored~"

Only after having entertained all the girls who surrounded him could Lux finally talk to Tillfur.

She went to visit him in the infirmary office a couple of times along with Sharis and Noct of the Triad, but they did not talk for long in consideration of the weary Lux.

"Good morning. Did anything unusual happen while I was away?"

"Hmm, that's right~. I've got some interesting news for Lux-chi but which one would you like to know first?"

Tillfur held three fingers in front of Lux and asked teasingly.

As the mood maker of the class and someone well-known and eager for any rumours, Tillfur gathered information from all over the academy.

It seemed like Lux's reasoning wasn't really wrong.

"Let's see, if possible, about something related to me I guess?"

"Alright! Hmm, well.....then, here!"

Thump!

And, she suddenly pulled a thick stack of papers out of nowhere and put them on his desk.

"What's this.....?"

While listening Lux could somewhat guess how did things turn out like this.

"Well~, it looks like an unreasonable amount of requests piled up while Lux-chi was not here. And, just for the record, I narrowed it down to one-third of it. So I'm counting on you to do those when you feel like it!"

"This is after whittling it down!?"

It was shocking.

Still, it wouldn't do to ignore it, he would try to reduce it if even a little before the tournament took place.

"I guess the second one is that recently my chest has grown slightly bigger"

"Is that even something I need to know!?"

"Uwa, how cruel! This is something pretty embarrassing to say you know! Lux-chi too, read the mood and go along with the joke! Uuh, how depressing....."

Lux averted his gaze from Tillfur as her cheeks turned faintly red.

(Don't say it if you are going to get embarrassed.....)

He smiled bitterly while looking nonchalantly at her breasts as he thought this was the sad nature of man.

"F-Forget about just now, okay? And□□finally for the main one, it seems like something amazing happened in the capital during the official mock battle held three days ago"

"In the capital.....?"

Lux inadvertently held his breath after seeing Tillfur's unusually serious expression.

As a Drag-Knight Lux was also known by another name.'Weakest Undeated'

その異名がついた王都の模擬戦には、かつて幾度となく出場したものだが、この学園に編入してからは、ほとんど情報すら仕入れてなかった。

Even though he once participated several times in the mock battles at the capital where he was given that name, he had hardly heard anything from there ever since he enrolled in the academy.

"Un. Lux-cci, do you know of the top 10 Drag-Knights there?"

"I have never really fought them directly during ranking matches, but well.....somewhat"

As the previous year's 3rd ranked Barzeride disappeared some of them have changed, but he remembered that the top 10 rankers were all strong fighter.

"The thing is, it seems that everyone from the 1st to the 10th rank were all brought to their knees on the same day by a single girl in battle□□"

"Eh.....?"

At those unexpected words Lux doubted his own ears.

"No way□□, that's impossible"

"That's right. In the first place, there are some elite Drag-Knights from the EX-Class among the 1st to the 10th rank, right?"

The surrounding girls raised their voices in disbelief but Tillfur kept her stern look.

"I think so too but there's no doubt of it. That girl is an amazing beauty with black hair and eyes of different colour, she appeared to be wearing black clothes from a foreign country□□"

From a fuzzy dream's memory Lux recalled the figure of a girl's bare body in the dark night.

"Is that□□"

Just as Lux was muttering so instructor Raigree came into the classroom.

"Everyone, go to your seats. Lesson is starting shortly"

Even though it was already summer vacation the remaining students regularly attend lessons and train to keep their minds and bodies from dulling.

When Lisha and the others who seemed to have gone for training early in the morning entered the classroom, the first class for Lux after a long time finally started.

Part 3

"Yosh, Lux! Let's go the cafeteria quickly! My stomach is really hungry."

"Even though you are sleeping like a log until just now, you wake up with really good timing..... Besides, I also have the right to invite him you know?"

When the lunch break came, Lisha who was sleeping prostrated on the desk became the first one who came beside Lux's desk.

Krulcifer cutting in there was also the everyday thing, but today the situation was a bit different.

"Today is my day, right? Helping Lu-chan."

Philuffy was speaking out from the neighboring seat while nibbling on a light brown donut.

She was a girl with trait of pink hair, amber eyes, and then voluptuous breasts.

Philuffy who was Lux's childhood friend and the young daughter of a financial conglomerate was talking with her usual my pace tone as though what happened at Ries Island had never happened.

The seed of a Ragnarok that was planted inside her□□Ratatoskr.

Lux fought in order to free Philuffy from that fate that could also be called a curse.

Fortunately, after that it seemed there was no bad effect for her and she could spend her everyday normally.

Lux was really glad about that and he was relieved, but□□,

"I, indeed today is your turn but, that, my body, it's already fine see."

When Lux replied like that stiffly, Philuffy stared fixedly into Lux's eyes with her usual expressionless look.

"I, only looked after Lu-chan once you know?"

"Eh.....!?"

"The nursing turn was decided with lottery, but I only got to do it once you know?"

Duty rotation system.

Because Lisha and others nominated themselves to look after Lux while he was unable to move properly, they decided their turn by

drawing lottery, and they took daily turn nursing Lux, but Philuffy's turn only came out once.

Of course that was just a coincidence, but it seemed that Philuffy couldn't accept it.

"No but, even Phi-chan is still recovering too, and as you can see, I'm already fine so□□"

Actually he still wasn't in his peak, but it was embarrassing for girls the same age like him to 'nurse' him, so Lux pretended to be tough like that but□□,

Puih.

As soon as Philuffy saw Lux's reaction, she averted her face with her face still looking serious.

"Eh? Phi-chan.....?"

"Lu-chan, is cold."

Philuffy muttered that with her cheeks slightly puffed up.

"It, it's not like that. It's, we are already at this age see, as I though doing thing like that in moderation is, wholesome or something□□"

When Lux tried to soothe Philuffy in panic,

"Even though, I slept with Lu-chan after you asked me."

Mutter, the girls at the surrounding were stirred at that instant.

"No, that, it's, it was when I caught a cold so□□"

"Also, you asked me too, when you found a spider in your room at night though?"

"Why do you remember that too-!? Forget it already!"

"You also touched my breast, several times while sleeping you know?"

"I'm sorry! It was my bad! That's why, I beg you stop it already□□"

Thus Lux raised the white flag. It was then,

"□□I'm sorry. Excuse me."

Suddenly a calm voice interrupted that tumult quietly.

It was the roommate of Airi, and the first year of the academy's well-known trio□□the Triad, Noct.

She came in front of Lux with her usual calm face.

".....Aa, Noct, it's been a while. What's the matter?"

"I was asked by Airi to secure Lux-san. It looks like she wants to talk at the courtyard. She is going ahead to reserve a spot, so can I ask you to accompany me?"

"Err..... Then, right now is also time for lunch, so everyone together□□"

"It's a matter that require urgency, so please come with me at once."

"Ah, right. I get it."

‘Sorry’, Lux turned down the other girls, then,

"Then, let's hurry."

Noct who was usually reserved unusually pulled Lux's hand and started walking.

"Wha, what's the matter? Is it that urgent□□"

When Lux asked agitatedly, Noct continued walking with her eyes staring forward while she answered.

"It seems that there is a danger approaching Lux-san. There is an enemy aiming and chasing after you, was what Airi said."

"Eh.....?"

"Does Lux-san know about a Drag-Knight called the Empire's Assassin Blade? I only heard from Airi just now, but□□"

Noct continued while pulling the hand of the bewildered Lux.

"The Empire's Assassin Blade? That's□□"

He had heard only the rumor a long time ago.

A Drag-Knight that boasted an abnormal strength who hailed from eastern island country that was once destroyed by the old empire.

The old empire's emperor□□Lux's father signed a contract with that Drag-Knight and then that person worked for the old empire. After that no one knew about that person's whereabouts.

When Lux tried to grope his thread of memory further, the came out at the other end of the passage and arrived at the courtyard.

Perhaps because it was lunch time, there were a lot of students coming and going.

Amidst the cheerful crowd that could be mistaken as a throng in the city, Lux could see the figure of Airi sitting on a curb. It was then Lux noticed.

"□□□□"

Lux's time suddenly stopped.

Inside the courtyard and the female students who he was used to seeing, there was a terribly mismatched existence mixed in.

A small statured girl wearing black outfit with high degree of exposure.

Glossy black hair that reached until the waist, and eyes of different color from each other.

Her right eye was vibrantly blue like the sea.

Her left eye was devilishly purple, calling to mind the image of a cursed gem.

Even after taking into account that her features weren't something he was familiar with in the new kingdom, she was a very beautiful girl.

And then□□what impressed the most was the girl's gaze.

It was an alluring gaze that was filled with strong affectionate zeal.

The smile of that girl whose cheeks were faintly flushed was so lovely that Lux's heart spontaneously jumped□□at the same time, it also aroused the feeling of shuddering fear in him.

(□□What's with, this girl? Her presence isn't like a person, isn't human.....!)

Instantly, the words of Tillfur this morning emerged in Lux's mind.

The external appearance of the girl who consecutively won against the first until tenth place in mock battle at the royal capital.

'That girl is an amazing beauty with black hair and eyes of different colour, she appeared to be wearing black clothes from a foreign country□□'

"Nii-san! It's that person! That person there, she is the Empire's Assassin Blade aiming at Nii-san!"

"-.....!?"

Airi's voice returned Lux to his senses.

The black clothed girl who was called the Empire's Assassin Blade was walking step by step toward Lux as though the other bewildered students didn't exist.

And then, when she finally arrived in front of Lux,

"Nii-san, please run away! With Nii-san's body right now, against this girl it's□□"

When Airi yelled, Noct who was beside Lux put her hand on the handle of her Sword Device.

That moment when a single move could set off the explosive situation□□,

"It's an honor to meet you, Aruji-sama. You are, the legitimate successor of Arcadia Empire□□Lux Arcadia, is that correct?"(TN: Aruji-sama = My lord/master)

The girl gracefully knelt in front of Lux and lowered her head reverently while speaking.

".....E, err, more or less it's like that□□?"

Lux immediately put up his guard, but he was taken aback from seeing that gentle manner.

"I have been looking forward to the day where I can meet you Aruji-sama. My name is Kirihime Yoruka. I was once called the Empire's Assassin Blade, a Drag-Knight of Arcadia Empire."

The girl who introduced herself as Yoruka stood up. She then brought her face closer to Lux with her cheeks blushing scarlet.

Her faint sweet perfume aroma and that distance where it felt like he was going to be kissed caused Lux's heart to throb.

"Wa, wait, what is this about!? About Arcadia Empire.....are you, from the rebel army? Could it be, you are coming to kill me□□"

The old empire that once ruled this region through the span of several hundred years.

The remnants of that old empire formed the rebel army that was hostile against the new kingdom. From that fact, Lux thought that perhaps this girl was hostile against Lux because he was siding with

the new kingdom, but.

"Certainly not."

In contrast with Lux's anxiety, Yoruka instead made a bright smile suddenly.

"I'm not connected with that rebel army whatever. I am genuinely coming here in order to serve you, Aruji-sama. It is my dearest wish for every shred of my flesh and every drop of my blood to be used up as the limbs or tool to make Aruji-sama's ambition come true."

"....."

Lux and Airi stood petrified on the spot hearing those very unexpected words. The students who were at the courtyard were also starting to make commotion.

Lux was unable to gauge the girl's true motive regarding the sudden proposal□□,

"Err, Kirihome.....san?"

"It will be my happiness if Aruji-sama can just call me Yoruka without any honorific. I am just a mere servant, my age is also a year below Aruji-sama□□and, what does Aruji-sama need from me?"

"That, you said just now about serving me□□"

"Yes. Please say anything if there is something that Aruji-sama wished for. Whether it's assassination, or some trivial chores, or perhaps□□even if Aruji-sama wishes for my body to take care of your desire using my mouth, I won't mind at all."

"Wai-!? How did you reach that conclusion!?"

"My? It's fine even if Aruji-sama doesn't hide it you know? Since some time ago, Aruji-sama has kept stealing glances at my skin. I have seen through at least that much."

"N, no, that's because I'm concerned that Yoruka's clothes are

exposing a lot□□that's not it. What I meant to ask, could it be that the one who consecutively won at mock battle in the capital, it was you?"

When Lux asked what was in his mind, Yoruka became awkwardly bashful.

"Aruji-sama is a bully aren't you? Regarding that matter, it was my shame, so it will be helpful if Aruji-sama can forget about it."

".....What, do you mean?"

When Lux asked, Yoruka made a faint wry smile while,

"Before going to greet Aruji-sama, I was thinking to obtain a bit of prestige first. It's so that Aruji-sama can recognize my true strength without reservation, thinking that□□but, it was a massive failure."

Yoruka muttered while averting her eyes with cheeks blushing red.

"Massive failure.....you mean?"

"Yes. Because it was a tournament in the capital, I thought that the top ranking would be quite a big deal, and yet□□they are just too weak. No matter how many people of that kind I defeated, it won't be anything to boast about at all."

"....."

Lux was speechless toward that innocent smile.

Naturally, defeating all the top rankers of the mock battle wasn't a trivial matter.

Even for the selected members for the All-Dragon Battle in the academy, it would be almost next to impossible to win against those top rankers counting out the Divine Drag-Ride user.

And yet□□this girl.

While Lux was staring at Yoruka in surprise,

"□□That intruder over there! Don't move!"

Suddenly there was the angry yell of a man. Several guards wearing white uniform were heading their way in a run.

It was likely that a student who noticed Yoruka entering inside the academy ground reported it to the guards.

But, the person in question Yoruka herself didn't even look perturbed. She spoke calmly.

"Aruji-sama. Please I beg you to kindly give me your first command. That is□□'Remove the nuisance'."

".....No, let's continue this talk later."

Lux who was convinced of Yoruka's disturbing sign immediately told her so.

"I want you to wait for a while until I can make some time. Can you leave from here without injuring them?"

When Lux carefully said that, Yoruka flashed him a composed smile.

"As you wish Aruji-sama. Then□□I will come again later."

Right after that, Yoruka started running with a relaxed movement.

"Wait you there! Don't think that you can escape from here!"

Yoruka evaded the hand of the male guards, she then vanished from sight by swiftly weaving her way through between the buildings.

The strange tension filling the courtyard finally left.

"Fuu....."

Lux took a deep breath with the departure of the small storm.

"Even though she is wearing that kind of loose clothes, and yet she easily evaded capture."

Noct whispered in admiration while looking at the direction Yoruka escaped toward.

But, Lux was harboring a troubled impression.

Even though she was only taking action for simple escape, but the sharpness of her movement was outstanding.

Most likely when she wore her Drag-Ride, she should display strength that was even more in different league.

(Can I win against her? Even if I'm using Bahamut in a state of perfect health□□)

That scene crossed his mind for an instant, however he shook his head.

Right now it was pointless to think about it.

Lux ended his fruitless consideration and returned his gaze to his front, it was then□□,

kyurururu

"Ah....."

Lux's face reddened from the sudden growl of his stomach.

"For now let's have lunch, Nii-san. We also need to talk about that girl."

"Yes. You're right."

Lux smiled wryly, and then he headed toward the cafeteria together with Airi and Noct.

He also talked about the matter of Yoruka to Lisha and others who came to check Lux's condition, and it was decided that before long they would discuss it with everyone.

With that, he thought that for the time being he could delay the problem of his encounter with the girl who could even be called his fate with the old empire, but□□,

(My, my thinking is too naïve.....!)

Perhaps because it was the summer vacation, or perhaps because the teachers were busy with the advance arrangements for the tournament, the afternoon class unusually became self-study class. It was then a new incident occurred.

"□□Aruji-sama. What could you be doing right now? This is a really peculiar work."

"Err.....this isn't work, it's a mathematic class you. Things like the weight of Drag-Ride, or the formula used when calculating motion□□I mean, for now, can you get out of the classroom first!?"

When Lux said the thing that in everyone's mind, Yoruka tilted her head and,

"Aruji-sama is highly strung isn't it? It's fine if Aruji-sama only think about me like empty air."

"No, it's not just me, everyone in the class is also troubled.....in the first place how did you enter the academy again.....?"

"It's better to fire those guards quickly without delay Aruji-sama. They are just too much of an incompetent to be the subordinate of Aruji-sama who will one day take back this country."

A very awkward atmosphere filled inside the self-study class.

After they parted in the courtyard□□Lux thought that even in the worst case Yoruka wouldn't show up again until after school, but of all thing, she intruded in until this class at the same time when the afternoon class began.

And then, she attached the desk and chair that she brought from somewhere beside Lux's seat, making it so that her body was coming near Lux's body from the side.

(E/D note: in short, seems like it's not a hall like in the anime)

According to Yoruka herself, she was guarding her master Lux.

However, because she was sticking close to him, he couldn't concentrate at all with the studying.

"....."

The stares from not just the other classmates, but also from Lisha, Krulcifer, and Philuffy hurt.

This bizarre situation was happening because of Lux's request to his classmates.

Kirihime Yoruka the girl who was once called as the Empire's Assassin Blade was terrifyingly strong, and then her action couldn't be predicted at all.

What he understood from Airi's story was that she was loyal toward the destroyed Arcadia Empire, and that she was fixated with Lux who was a male from the former imperial family. Provoking the girl in the present would be dangerous.

Fortunately, it seemed that she was listening to Lux to a certain degree. He wished to settle the matter peacefully without causing any big commotion at the present time.

And so, he requested everyone to not interfere with him and Yoruka but.

(How to say it, it feels like I completely picked the wrong choice.....)

Lisha who should be sleeping right away if it was self-study time was ignoring studying in favor of glaring at Yoruka. As for Krulcifer who was looking calm in a glance, there were already papers crumpled into round shape on her desk.

Philuffy beside him was looking absentminded on her own pace like usual, but conversely speaking, if Philuffy became unable to hold herself back, then even Lux wouldn't be able to stop her

anymore.

Inside the atmosphere that felt like sleeping on a bed of nails, the sound of bell that informed the end of the class rang.

"My, it looks like it's finally over. Then Aruji-sama, let's have a bit of talk in your room□□"

"Wa, wait a second!? You see, after this I have some chores."

"My? Is that so?"

"Right. That's why Yoruka, you spend a bit of time outside okay? Can you come again when my work is over? It's fine for you to not guard me while I'm inside the academy."

"I understand Aruji-sama."

He thought that she might refuse because he had made her waiting until now, but Yoruka nodded unexpectedly easily and left from the classroom.

Lisha and Krulcifer came in front of Lux who was sighing in relieve.

"Oi Lux. Did that woman said where is she going? I need to talk a bit to her."

"Ah, please don't..... I understand your feeling but, the All-Dragon Battle is right on the corner already."

Seeing Lisha drawing out her Sword Device with a daring smile, Lux hurriedly soothed her down. But then this time it was Krulcifer who looked like there was shadow around her eyes.

"Nevertheless Lux-kun, you too don't look like that you really hate it aren't you? That girl is beautiful, and she is also dressed lewdly just how Lux-kun likes it, good for you isn't it?"

"Even Krulcifer-san, please don't bully me like that! Tha, that's, certainly it was my bad that I couldn't refuse her clearly but□□"

"Lu-chan, ecchi."

Philuffy's brief words that were muttered calmly from the side with that serious look expressed how she was feeling.

If the third year Celis was here, Lux was convinced that it would become even more troublesome.

In the end he requested everyone that he would do something about it before long. The class was over and it became after school.

(Haa, it's finally over.....)

But after that, when he thought that he was temporarily freed from Yoruka, he was mistaken.

"□□Aruji-sama. I will also help out."

Lux was going to do three light chores for his relaxation and rehabilitation.

The girl appeared at his destination and offered to help.

"I'm skilled in handling edged tool."

When Yoruka appeared at the back of the school building where he was mowing grass, she began to cut the grass using Sword Device. It was terrifying so Lux stopped her.

"I'm stronger than I look you know?"

When Lux was watering the flower bed, she was throwing out a large amount of water right from the water bucket, so he stopped her.

"I'm good with disposing unneeded thing."

When Lux was tidying up documents, she was going to incinerate all the stained book so he stopped her.

"I, I beg you, can you just stay still over there.....?"

"Let's see. Then, I'll serve as Aruji-sama's guard just as planned."

At the end, Yoruka concluded so with a smile that contained not even the slightest ill will.

"Haa, the fatigue from the chores is three times the usual.....!"

The sun finally set and the night came where the cries of the insect began to be audible.

Lux who received the dorm's mother permission was heading to the large bath of the girl's dormitory after so long.

For Lux who was the only boy in this academy, this was a precious time that was permitted to him after all the female students had finished taking bath.

These few days where he was unable to move properly from the recoil of Over Limit, he was wiping his body with towel, but as expected it was insufficient with just that in this summertime.

"Fuu....., it's really calming."

Lux dipped into the wide bathtub slowly after lightly washing himself.

The large public bath was created from white marble. Orange colored lamps were illuminating the place.

Entering this place by himself gave him indescribable feeling of liberation, it felt like he had even become a king.

(Well, I'm also formerly from imperial family though□□)

Lux smiled wryly while recalling the matter of Yoruka who was calling him as 'the legitimate successor of the empire'.

The only thing that he clearly understood from her shadowing him this whole day was that she didn't have any ability for a normal life at all.

It seemed that she had confidence only in regard of sewing but□□.

"I wonder how should I treat her.....?"

Lux talked to himself while soaking deeply inside the bathtub.

He still didn't understand the true intention of Yoruka, the Empire's Assassin Blade.

What he knew was only that she was still faithful toward Arcadia Empire that had perished five years ago and she wanted to swear her loyalty to Lux who was the last remaining blood-related male of the imperial family.

"As I thought, it's no good unless I talk properly with her....."

After whispering, Lux got out of the bath and headed to the washing place.

If that girl was the survivor of the old empire's servant, then he had the duty to face her as the survivor of the imperial family.

While Lux was sitting on a chair and washed his body, around his back there was the sensation of a towel that was lathered with soap.

"□□Is there something troubling you, Aruji-sama?"

Was it his just imagination, he felt like he was hearing the voice of said girl. Lux smiled wryly.

"Yes, just a bit."

When Lux replied half-heartedly, the washing sensation on his back became a bit stronger.

The superb strength control felt really pleasant.

He was bad at washing his own back, so it felt good that his back was getting washed well, but□□,

"□□Eh?"

Lux who split his attention in his thought suddenly noticed that both his hands were right in front of him.

Then, what was the sensation on his back then?

"How are you feeling, Aruji-sama?"

"□□!?"

When Lux turned around in panic hearing that voice, there was the color of skin in front of his eyes.

White and bewitching, glistening and lustrous skin of a girl.

That beautiful naked body with feminine undulation from the breast until the legs was only hidden by just a few bubbles. It was mostly in plain sight.

"Wha, wha-wha-wha-wha-wha, what are you doing here Yoruka-!?"

Lux was backing away in his intense confusion while saying that. In response Yoruka giggled with her cheeks slightly red.

"There is no need to worry. I'm properly carrying my Sword Device after all. There is no flaw in your protection detail Aruji-sama."

"That's not it! That's not what I'm concerned about!"

"My? It's fine to not be so reserved around me you know, Aruji-sama?"

Lux spontaneously gave a straight man retort with bright red face, but Yoruka wasn't perturbed and she moved even closer to him.

"I have ascertained the previous day that there is no problem with Aruji-sama's male instinct. If it's your wish, please allow me to help as a woman in this place."

".....Eh?"

Hearing that sentence, the girl's naked body flashed back inside Lux's mind and he was bewildered.

"At that time, I was going to take off my clothes to show that I was unarmed, but Aruji-sama seemed tired so I put back my clothes. And so□□will Aruji-sama let me help now?"

Yoruka's fingertip slowly traced Lux's chest, at that moment□□,

"□□Sorry! I remember that I've something to do for a bit-!"

Lux evaded Yoruka, poured himself with hot water, and then he went outside the public bath without pause.

He changed clothes mostly without toweling his wet body, and then he started running to escape from that place.

"Haa, haa.....I forgot that my body still cannot move well because I'm still recovering....."

Lux breathed heavily with heaving shoulders while taking stock of his present situation once more.

He wanted to consult with everyone and thought a bit more about the matter of Yoruka, but it didn't seem like he could do that.

Lux went to Airi's room and then asked her to tell everyone that.

And then he returned to his room and made preparation.

Part 4

Outside the academy's ground.

The first city block of Cross Field at night was quiet with little lighting.

The curfew had passed a long time ago, so he would surely get scolded by the dorm's mother when he returned, but it couldn't be helped.

Inside the dim light, Lux was heading to an empty plot with few pedestrian traffic□□however it possessed some degree of space. It was then a faint presence followed him from behind.

It was early summer night when people were going to sleep.

Lux sharpened his nerves inside the silence before he finally could sense that existence.

"Yoruka. Are you already nearby?"

"Please rest assured. I am constantly at Aruji-sama's side."

When Lux questioned toward empty air, a voice immediately responded back.

Right after that, Yoruka showed up from the shadow of a building while smiling.

Inside the darkness of night where there was almost no moonlight, the girl's different eye colors were reflected beautifully.

"But, this is a little careless. I heard that it is relatively safe inside the Cross Field, but if we think about Aruji-sama's status□□"

".....Say Yoruka, why are you trying to devote yourself until that far to me?"

Yoruka only returned a quiet smile toward Lux's question.

"From what I heard through the rumors, you were a Drag-Knight from the nation of Koto□□a country that was destroyed by the old empire, at that time you signed a contract with my father the emperor, and you joined under the banner of the empire's army....."

"How unusual. When rumor is embellished, the resulting conclusion will be off the mark, however□□, yes, that's correct. Frankly speaking, Aruji-sama's perception is mostly not mistaken."

Yoruka's face burst into a bright smile and she showed affirmation like that.

"Is that really all? Because, Arcadia Empire has perished already you know?"

But, what Lux wanted to know was beyond that point.

"If you had a contract with my father the emperor to protect me or the lineage of Arcadia Empire, then there is no more need to protect that kind of contract□□"

"My name□□Kirihome is a name that was assigned to me later."
(TN: Kirihome is formed from the kanji of kiri(cut) and hime(princess).)

Yoruka suddenly let out a jesting tone and turned her back on Lux with a twirl.

"The surname of the royal family that governed the nation of Koto was Habakiri□□. While I was a princess of a country, when I was a child I was casted away because I am disqualified as a royalty."

"....."

Lux unconsciously held his tongue hearing the content of Yoruka's story.

The nation of Koto was a small island country at the east, at the past the skirmish that contested trade resources developed into a war, and in the end the country was destroyed by the old empire.

The fact that Yoruka was a princess of that country was also something shocking, but,

"Casted away.....you mean?"

"Yes. Well, it's not something of significant. In the first place it was my little brother who was expected to succeed the throne□□rather at that time I was relieved because I didn't need to do all the troublesome things anymore. After that my talent in sword and as Drag-Knight was recognized and I was picked as the royal guard of my brother."

Based from Yoruka's bright attitude, it was unthinkable that she was lying.

However, Lux wondered why.

He felt like he could see some kind of emotion inside Yoruka's elusive personality for the first time.

"A few years after that. At the wartime against Arcadia Empire, I signed a contract with his majesty the emperor. The contract is for me to live and die for the empire. I don't have attachment to desire or interest by nature since I was born. That's why, I'm planning to fight for this country□□until its very end."

".....-!?"

Yoruka turned around. Her violent smile made Lux to step back reflexively.

"Then, please allow me to ask my own question too. Aruji-sama□□how long you are going to deceive those girls?"

".....What, do you mean?"

"It means exactly as it sound. With Aruji-sama's strength, it's possible to destroy this falsehood of a country immediately. Even cutting down the pillar of this country and rebuilding Arcadia Empire is□□"

"You're joking, right.....?"

It was impossible.

It wouldn't easy by any stretch of mean for Lux to take down the present imperial capital by himself, even for example he actually did it, the country wouldn't change. Above all else, Lux who once destroyed the old empire had no such intention at all.

"Of course, I won't mind even if Aruji-sama is looking a bit at the long term. But□□destroying this country and taking back Arcadia Empire someday. Can I ask Aruji-sama to swear at least that right now?"

A pure smile of a girl that was filled with anticipation was directed at Lux.

"....."

Lux lost his words against that determination that was like a curse lurking in the shadow.

He could almost understand the real feeling of terror that was the reason this girl who was formerly of the royalty was banished from her royal family.

(This girl, it almost like she has no self-restriction.)

People no matter who would live depending on something.

That something would be family or friend as the closest. And then from their position inside a system like their occupation or organization, people would live while being conscious of their position and relationship inside something big like their city or country.

But, this girl didn't have anything like that.

She was merely moving for the sake of herself as a single unique and independent individual.

Therefore if Lux mistaken his choice here, she would bare her fang even toward Lux who she recognized as her lord.

(But□□)

If she was a person who was succeeding the will of the old empire, the country that Lux failed to save in the past, then he was even more unable to deceive and lie to her here.

"Unfortunately, I don't have any intention like that."

Lux lifted his face and stared straight into Yoruka's eyes while informing her so.

"Arkadia Empire has perished. It ended five years ago in that day. That's why, you too□□don't need to obey such contract anymore."

"....."

Yoruka's expression didn't change at all even while hearing that farewell pronouncement.

"Is Aruji-sama, serious?"

When Lux nodded wordlessly, Yoruka slowly took off his gaze from him. She then looked up at the moon that was obscured by cloud.

"The wind is blowing isn't it?"

Lured by Yoruka's words, Lux lifted up his face to look at the sky, it was at that moment□□,

"□□!?"

GIINN.....!

The sound of high-pitched sword clashing burst sharply in front of Lux.

One side that caused that was Yoruka's slash from the Sword Device she unsheathed from her waist and flashed in an arc.

And then the other side was a rapier thrust that flew like an arrow from behind Lux.

That slim blade had countless silver lines running on it the same like Yoruka's Sword Device.

".....Celis-senpai!?"

When Lux looked back in surprise, a girl was standing there.

The academy's strongest third year student with the trait of beautiful blonde hair and jade eyes.

A girl that was the captain of the academy's raid unit Syvalles(Knight Squadron), Celistia Ralgris.

"Please draw back Lux. It's dangerous for the current you."

Celis muttered that calmly while not taking off her gaze from

Yoruka who was the owner of the blade clashing with hers.

With his current condition, he would become hindrance for Celis.

Thinking that Lux leaped backward. Right after that the crossing swords of the two scattered sparks and repelled each other.

"You are quite something."

Yoruka showed a surprised smile while leaping back. She then readied her katana-type Sword Device in middle stance.

"The leg strength and explosive power that can close the distance from that position until here with one step. The skill to block my slash with that slim sword. And then above all else□□your instantaneous discernment is splendid."

Far from getting shaken up by the sudden interruption, Yoruka instead muttered looking like she was enjoying it very much.

In contrast Celis lightly pulled back her rapier and observed her opponent silently with unmoving stance.

"You are exaggerating. I still haven't showed anything that is worthy of praise."

Right after Celis declared so to pressure the opponent, light particles converged behind her and a golden dragon appeared.

The Divine Drag-Ride that Celis owned, Lindwurm was summoned with mind control operation without chanting the passcode.

"Celis-senpai! She is still□□!?"

"It's regretful, but I won't listen if you are asking me to be considerate to her. This is not an opponent that will allow such carelessness."

Celis declared with aloof air.

"A good decision□□but"

That moment, Yoruka whose eyes were shadowed leaped back from that place with a step.

".....!?"

"You aren't being careless at all, but you aren't seriously thinking that you can really defeat me aren't you?"

Yoruka easily took a distance of ten mel just from sharply kicking on the ground once.

At the same time she quickly readied her Sword Device and light particles converged behind her in high speed. A Drag-Ride with dark color they had never seen before was formed and it instantly transformed into armor that covered Yoruka's body.

"□□Prepare yourself!"

Celis covered herself with Lindwurm's armor and chased after the backing away Yoruka□□she unleashed a thrust with her lance.

Yoruka who was similarly deploying her Drag-Ride while escaping also swung a huge 'katana' that was the same shape with her Sword Device and quickly blocked the lance.

".....!?"

It was an instant of offense and defense where there was no time to even breath.

The moment sparks that were fiercer than the previous clash scattered, Yoruka backed away even more and took some distance.

Right after that, the special armament that Lindwurm possessed□□, Lightning Lance's surface was traveled by lightning and brightly illuminated the night's darkness at the surrounding.

"Looks like you have a really good instinct. Also, that Divine Drag-Ride is□□"

Celis silently readied her lance and whispered with her gaze on Yoruka.

At that darkness ahead, the Drag-Ride with peculiar shape was floating up along with a fierce killing intent.

"That's□□!?"

Lux spontaneously held his breath seeing that peculiar Drag-Ride figure.

"Let me introduce it Aruji-sama. This is the Divine Drag-Ride in my possession□□ <Yato no Kami>."(TN: Yato no Kami = God of Night Katana)

Lux's eyes could see the full appearance of that Drag-Ride at the same time with Yoruka's mutter.

The sharp shape of the armor that was like blade, strange mechanical ring that was wrapping around the waist□□and then, two auxiliary feet extending backward from its two legs.

The armor's configuration itself resembled the general purpose Drag-Ride <Drake> that Noct of the Triad was using, but the dragon majesty emitted from this Drag-Ride was obviously in a different dimension compared to other.

(This is bad! At this rate, leaving this to only Celis-senpai is□□)

Lux who felt the threat put his hand on Bahamut's Sword Device intending to reinforce Celis.

But then a voice that came from somewhere stopped him.

"□□Sorry, but I'll steal your spotlight here, Lux!"

Instantly flying huge metals shaped like an arrowhead attacked Yato no Kami consecutively.

Yoruka quickly swung her katana-shaped Blade and repelled away everything.

"This weapon□□Lisha-sama!?"

When Lux looked up to the sky, he immediately found the

answer.

Divine Drag-Ride Tiamat.

Lisha who was wearing a crimson dragon was commanding its four special projectile armaments□□Legion(Airborne Fort) and assaulted Yoruka.

"I was irritated by this half-naked girl the whole time anyway. I'm going to have my payback now."

"The attack just now is quiet powerful□□but, it was very sloppy wasn't it? How about you aim a bit more before throwing it?"

Yoruka dodged the four Legions that were attacking her again while still showing a leisurely smile even then. There□□,

"That's because it's related with this thing called cooperation."

PAN! There was a voice that shook the air and Yato no Kami's hand that was holding the Blade snapped back.

Even more shots of light bullet hit the Drag-Ride frame while her posture was unbalanced.

".....!?"

The shots' strength was blocked by the barrier, but Yoruka retreated even further from receiving the precision consecutive sniping.

"Krulcifer-san!?"

The figure of Krulcifer who was similarly wearing Fafnir appeared at the sky.

Most likely she was together with Celis and Lisha coming here after him to watch the situation.

"Our bad for outnumbering you like this, but don't think that we will go easy on you."

Krulcifer stated to Yoruka like that with her usual cool expression.

At the same time, she resumed sniping from the sky using her Rifle(Sniper Cannon) while matching the timing with Lisha's Legion.

Even so Yoruka skillfully controlled Yato no Kami and continued to dodge the attack.

"□□You are, caught."

Suddenly the tip of a wire that flew from behind Yoruka snapped on Yato no Kami's wrist.

"Philuffy!"

Lux's childhood friend, Philuffy. Her Divine Drag-Ride, Typhoon possessed special armament called Pile Anchor.

Wires were fired from various part of the armor, then the pile at the tip could seize the enemy.

Right after that, Philuffy who got down on the empty plot pulled Yoruka toward her in high speed.

"Philuffy! There is residential area nearby, so don't do anything excessive□□"

"Yes. I know."

Typhoon couldn't use its fist to send the enemy flying or use a special armament with excessive destructive power here.

Even so the straight fist attack from Typhoon would surely be able to destroy Yato no Kami without difficulty.

□□But,

"Oh dear."

Yoruka showed a fearless smile. Right after that, the binding of

the Pile Anchor's tip suddenly came off.

"□□!?"

The moment the calculation of everyone there went out of order, Yato no Kami made use of its momentum from getting pulled in to slash at Typhoon.

Philuffy immediately used her Drag-Ride's stout arm and successfully block the slash, but the surface of the arm that blocked the blade had countless letters shining purplish red slowly spreading on it.

"That's□□!?"

Lux opened his eyes wide. At that moment, two Pile Anchors were simultaneously fired from Typhoon's both shoulders.

At the direction the Pile Anchors were fired at, there were Lisha and Krulcifer who were aiming at Yoruka from the sky.

"Wha-.....!?"

It was an attack that came in an unexpected timing, but the two dodged the pile in a hair's breadth.

"Oi! What are you doing natural airhead! You want to shoot us down huh!?"

Lisha yelled angrily, but Philuffy whispered ".....That's not it" there.

At the same time, Yoruka dodged Celis's spear thrust and she smiled.

"It's amazing how the two of you dodged that surprise attack. But□□, how about this?"

"□□What!? Uah!?"

"-.....!?"

Lisha's Tiamat and Krulcifer's Fafnir suddenly snapped backward as though they were pushed away by something. Their altitude dropped drastically.

But, rather than that fact, Lisha was more confused by the attack method that caused it.

"Impossible.....! Why is my Legions are willfully why!?"

"They're coming!"

It happened together with Krulcifer's tensed voice.

The propulsion device built inside Yato no Kami's auxiliary feet for leaping high.

Fire burst out from there and the Drag-Ride jumped to midair as though it was kicking on an unseen floor.

Yato no Kami that was ascending using double jump aimed at the falling two Drag-Rides and quickly swung its katana.

"Kuh.....!?"

"Too slow."

Lisha and Krulcifer readied their respective weapon in order to block the slash, but at that moment Yoruka's Blade had finished slashing.

Sharp impact ran through the frame of Tiamat and Fafnir and their altitude dropped even more.

"Kua.....! Now you've done it! You damn half-naked girl.....!"

Lisha corrected her balance, then she tried to ready her Cannon. It was then something unusual occurred with her Drag-Ride.

"Please be careful! She is controlling your Drag-Ride!"

"What.....!"

"The moment Lisha heard Celis's voice, mysteriously shining

letters were surfacing on the surface of Tiamat's armor.

And then, the Cannon muzzle aimed at Celis as though it was manipulated by something, then the Drag-Ride's finger pulled the trigger.

A beam of light as thick as a pillar attacked toward Lindwurm in a straight line.

"U, ku.....!"

Lux escaped the danger just a moment faster by hiding behind a rubble, but the impact's after effect caused his to leak out a groan.

"My my, so it's exposed already. As expected this difference in number is a disadvantage for me."

When the white smoke cleared, Yoruka smiled in jest.

"Allow me to introduce it to Aruji-sama. My Yato no Kami's Divine Raiment is <Spell Code>, it's a power to temporarily control other Drag-Ride that it touched."

And then she revealed the true shape of her own Divine Raiment without hesitation.

"It snatch the control of the opponent's Drag-Ride at the area centered on the touched spot, the longer the time of contact is□□the more accurate and powerful the command that can be given out. If I can touch a Drag-Ride for ten second without breaking contact, I will be able to put that Drag-Ride completely under my command."

"□□In reverse, this controlling power will also disappear the longer time pass while we are separated from you, right?"

Krulcifer calmly stepped forward and interrupted Yoruka's talk.

The Spell Code's letters were already vanishing from the surface of Fafnir's armor.

She must have instantly grasped that fact from comparing her

own Drag-Ride with others.

Even in the case that they were touched, if they immediately took distance, Yato no Kami would only be able to control the part that was touched.

Even for example they got controlled, the effect would wear out if they took some time separated from Yato no Kami.

But, even after knowing that weak point, it didn't change the fact that it was a Divine Raiment that was hiding a terrifyingly troublesome ability.

Even if one blocked the opponent's attack, but just from that contact the control of their Drag-Ride would be stolen.

Therefore, they would be burdened with an overwhelming disadvantage at the point they chose close quarter combat.

And then, there was the godspeed sword handling that Yoruka displayed just now.

"....."

They couldn't win.

No matter how advantaged they were in term of number, they were near residential area here, because they were restricted in what they could do as to not to involve the civilian, they couldn't act excessively.

(Possibly, other than deciding the match instantly□□there's no other way.)

It would be a gamble if he used Bahamut in his state, but Lux resolved himself and put his hand on his Sword Device once more.

Then□□,

"Oi, what's that sound?"

"Didn't it come from that empty plot? It's really close from here!"

"What are the guards doing? Can't be helped.....I'll go call them□□"

Such voices could be heard from the surrounding houses with turned on light.

"Looks like people are coming. Let's stop exposing our hand to each other with this much. My objective of displaying my strength and Yato no Kami's power is already accomplished."

Yoruka casually looked around before suggesting that.

But, Celis who was wearing Lindwurm came forward and pointed her huge lance.

"Are you thinking that you can escape?"

"I have no problem continuing you know? It feels like I will be able to have quite much fun if you are my opponent. But, let me ask you instead. Is it really okay, wasting my consideration like this?"

Yoruka's tone sounded like they were only chatting casually.

However that smile which looked gentle in a glance was filled with terrifyingly overpowering pressure.

"Celis-senpai□□this is"

Lux immediately called out to Celis's back.

This girl called Yoruka didn't care about right and wrong.

If they continued fighting like this, she surely wouldn't have the slightest bit of hesitation to involve the civilian and guard gathering here because of the commotion.

They had to avoid that worst case no matter what.

".....I understand."

After hesitating slightly, Celis backed off. Lisha and others also lowered their weapon following that.

Then Yoruka also lowered her katana and slowly faced Lux again.

"Then, Aruji-sama. I'll be waiting ahead in the capital."

Yoruka flashed a bewitching smile and bowed reverently while still wearing Yato no Kami.

"I will ask about the aforementioned matter once more at that time. Is that□□all right with you?"

"Are you.....serious?"

Lux took a deep breath and asked with a trembling voice.

"You are planning to fight with the intention to restore Arcadia Empire no matter what?"

"Yes."

Yoruka nodded without hesitation in her expression. Then she suddenly showed a gentle smile.

"If Aruji-sama has no intention for that□□I'm planning to accomplish that even by myself."

Saying that, she turned her back at him, and then she looked back with only her head and continued her words.

"It's truly unfortunate that I am turned down here. But, my feeling that wish to devote my loyalty to Aruji-sama doesn't change at all. To proof that, if Aruji-sama come together with me right now, I'll tell you a secret that I'm putting in reserve. It's a talk of a plan□□that concern the life or death of this country."

".....A, plan?"

Those words that contained concerning implication caused Lux to ask back with dubious face.

"I'm looking forward to it Aruji-sama. The time when I can meet with you again next□□"

But, Yoruka didn't answer Lux's question and slowly walked away.

At the same time the surface of Yato no Kami shined. That frame instantly assimilated into darkness and its figure vanished.

"Is that one of the functions of specially equipped type Drag-Ride Drake the camouflage effect?"

When Celis muttered, Lisha and others who came to her side also made vigilant expression altogether.

"Troublesome. It seems that in battle the camouflage ability's performance will drop drastically, even so"

"Right....."

Lux nodded at Krulcifer's muttering.

Under the darkness, if she fought while using camouflage, it would be overwhelmingly disadvantageous for them.

Yoruka was fighting simply to show her true strength to Lux.

"So, she is waiting in the capital. Don't tell me, is that girl planning to come out in the international tournament?"

Lisha grumbled that with a displeased expression. In respond Philuffy whispered "I wonder" and she dispelled the armor she was wearing.

Krulcifer who saw that also dispelled her armor and sighed.

"But, that girl doesn't look like the type of person who will joke around. It's a bit concerning regarding that point. Whether it's about her statement that she will appear in front of Lux-kun again, or about that some kind of plan too"

".....You're right."

A girl who swore to destroy the new kingdom and succeed the dying will of Arcadia Empire.

Perhaps they would fight her once more in the stage of the capital that was holding the All-Dragon Battle.

Lux took a deep breath and looked up to the sky where the curtain of night had been lowered.

The devilish crescent moon that was tinged with shadow.

That existence that seemed as though it was symbolizing the girl called Yoruka was silently looking down on him.

Part 5

Two hours after Yoruka exited the first city block.

At an abandoned building at the outskirts of Cross Field where there was no sign of people.

Yoruka arrived nearby an aging and crumbling residence that was covered with green moss.

"Have you finished your greeting to the chores loving ruined prince, you murdered pretending to be loyal subject?"

Right after Yoruka dispelled Yato no Kami's armor, a voice mixed with contempt greeted her.

Looking up, there was a robed figure standing on the dilapidated house's roof.

It was the Black Marketer who in these few years had wandered from place to place, selling weapon to various country and secretly maneuvered various incidents.

It was a girl named Hayes who at present was taking the position of Heiburg's military strategist.

Yoruka had finished confirming that this girl and three other people were nearby using the radar that Yato no Kami, a Drake-type Drag-Ride possessed.

"Yes, it's just as I expected, he is a person worthy to be the next

emperor. □□By the way, how is the wound of that right hand? You should take better care with that."

Yoruka told with her voice in exaltation while her lips were forming an arc.

She saw through the wounded hand that Hayes was hiding inside her sleeve and pointed it out. Was that merely a coincidence?

Or perhaps, could it be her mischief that came from her instinct seeing through that it was a wound given to Hayes from Lux?

"....."

Either way, Hayes snorted in irritation and looked down on Yoruka with her asymmetrically colored eyes.

"Looks like you've forgotten your debt to me after I finally woke you up from your five years of sleeping underneath that island huh? Even though I have even applied a'Baptism'of different kind from mine into that left eye."

"If that's really the case, then it would be better if only you didn't entrust me to that odd noble and met me right from the start instead to talk about various things."

".....You mean Dobar? That was a miscalculation. I planned to give you instruction through that guy. Because that idiot tried to use you as he pleased, it became problematic. That's all."

"I never thought, that at that time even you were also inside the Ark. If I knew, I would also help. It was a pity."

Hayes glared in annoyance at the jesting Yoruka. She then threw a letter that was sealed with wax to her.

"The plan is written there. Your role until the appointed day is there. Dump it there after you finished reading, and then piss off from my sight quickly."

"I understand. Then let us have a united front just as planned. In order to□□destroy this new kingdom."

Yoruka answered while opening the seal of the letter, after that□□she left without any sound from there.

When the girl's presence completely disappeared, the three shadows lurking in that place silently moved out.

Sania, Egnid, Kirly.

These three people of the special force 'Cerberus' who were the direct subordinates of Hayes were Drag-Knights affiliated with Heiburg Republic.

The brown skinned girl Sania who was their leader lifted up her face as though she had been waiting for it.

"Will that woman really move as we intended? Certainly her strength is something unparalleled, but isn't it a bit dangerous using her?"

When Sania advised so with a slightly nervous tone, Hayes sighed and turned her back on her.

And then she slowly turned only her head back while her body was basking on the moonlight of ultramarine color.

"You're nitpicking on my strategy? The likes of you who is at the lowest class in Heiburg is now really a big shot huh."

"....."

Sania held her tongue after that mocking sentence.

"Hayes-sama. That's....."

The red haired man beside Sania, Egnid reflexively tried to say something, but Sania's hand quickly stopped him.

"□□We are moving."

At that moment, Hayes looked down on the three with a grin pasted on her face and she told them the answer.

"The preparation is already finished. The Empire's Assassin Dagger and that ruined prince, they will surely try to kill each other following their own will, due to the garbage conviction they have□□and the inevitable incident that will happen in the capital after this. Do I need to explain more than this to you all who are nothing but a single cog in the big picture?"

"No....."

Sania silently answered so toward Hayes who was making a wicked countenance.

If their master had her own thought, then they could only withdraw here.

"After this we will head toward the capital just as planned. Then, excuse us."

After Sania said that, she took only Egnid with her and left.

Before long after the two entered into a plain with no sign of people, the red haired man sighed.

"Fuu.....even so, as expected that newcomer strategist-sama is really difficult."

"Don't chatter. We are already formally military personnel."

Sania immediately rebuked Egnid from his grumbling.

"Military personnel eh..... Certainly that's so, but is it really okay for us to keep being like this?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, that strategist and also the other, aren't they still hiding something from us?"

Egnid muttered that and slowly looked behind him.

It was as if he was being vigilant against the existences at that direction.

"The other, what do you mean by that?"

"Have you ever seen Kirly's bare face?"

"Never..... I heard that her face had burn mark. She got it when Arcadia Empire invaded her home when she was still a child."

"That was just on the surface don't you think? That girl isn't like us who was taken custody from among the war orphans by Heiburg's military affair department and entered officer training school, she was brought from who know where by that strategist. I heard that she cannot even speak word so the story you heard actually doesn't come directly from her□□. I incidentally, saw that girl's bare face before this."

"So what? Don't tell me, under the mask it was a monster, there's no way that's true."

"Exactly like that."

"....."

Sania's complexion changed when she heard Egnid's immediate reply.

"Just joking. □□Wait, don't pull out your sword captain! It's half true!"

"Just speak without putting on air."

"Aah geez, we too have got a position that is a bit respectable now, so let's act with a bit more composure yeah.So, about Kirly's bare face□□when she took off her mask and lowered her hood, there was something metallic like a bird's feather attached on her head."

"Bird's, feather?"

"Of course, it wasn't accessory or anything. It looked like it's directly growing from around her ear. What's more, her face is a pretty thing, there ain't any burn mark or anything, not in the slightest yeah."

"□□Something like sickness, or deformation from birth. And the mask was for hiding that?"

"Who knows. But, regarding that strategist-sama, there is only thing that is clear about her. Do you know?"

".....Even I know if it's just that much."

Sania made a bitter smile that was mixed with resignation and she kept silent.

Both of them became war orphan at the war with the old empire, from there they were at the lowest social strata for a long time before they became military soldier.

Even so they were just Drag-Knight of the lowest class because of the difference of birth. One day they were picked by Hayes who arrived at Heisburg and valued as her direct subordinates□□after that when Hayes was placed as Heisburg's military strategist, they formally obtained a position as a knight within the country.

But, even so they had a feeling that was like a tinge of anxiety, that it was hard to honestly accept their present situation.

The outsider existence called Hayes who was wholly enveloped in mystery.

They wondered whether it was all right to entrust the fate of their country in the hand of such person.

"We don't have any other choice than to settle this."

They had hesitation.

Even so Sania and Egnid renewed their determination that they could only advance forward and they started walking once more.

Chapter 2: The Night Before All-Dragon Battle

Part 1

It was the morning two days later after Yoruka appeared in front of Lux and caused a disturbance.

Finally Lux and others departed to the capital for the sake of the international tournament—the All-Dragon Battle.

Using horse carriage, they passed through four checking stations for three whole days before they finally arrived there.

The royal capital Lordgalia.

After the old empire perished, it was rebuilt. Its name and also townscape were greatly changed and now it was the biggest city of the new kingdom.

The castle town, a metropolis that continued toward the enormous palace was separated into seventeen blocks, far more than Cross Field. Its population density was also high.

So that it was possible for the city to be self-sufficient, industry, agriculture, commerce—and then army's base were scrupulously laid out, lining up with regularity that was a marvel.

Arcadia Empire that possessed several hundred years of history, all of its technology and assets were massed to build up the workings of this city, even now after five years since the empire turned into the new kingdom, it still remained as scenery.

"It has also been really long since I'm here."

Entering the high class inn of the capital that they reserved, Lisha sat down on the sofa at the entrance and muttered so.

Perhaps because of the long travel, the other selection members entered their allotted room to take some rest it seemed.

"During the summer vacation, it seems there are also a lot of students returning back to their home in the capital(here) you know? It seems they will also come to cheer for us in the All-Dragon Battle, if you're lucky you might cross each other in the city somewhere."

Headmaster Relie who went out of her room stretched her back while saying that. Hearing that, Lux's little sister who was nearby□□Airi was showing a complicated expression.

"Rather than talking about that, it's a wonder that the government people is allowing headmaster to still lead this group."

".....Well, it was just barely. At any rate, on top of getting a scolding of a lifetime's worth, I was also paying quiet a lot of fine. Currently I'm not behind the bar is solely thanks to my current position and money."

"It's not really something that can be joked about though....."

After Lux retorted at Relie who was showing a complicated smile, an awkward atmosphere flowed.

The training camp at Ries Island that was carried out two weeks ago.

There the headmaster Relie performed Ruin investigation without permission from the government in the capital in order to save her little sister Philuffy.

It seemed that her responsibility for that illegal act was questioned and there was a really intense exchange between her and the capital's government.

But, in order to avoid mayhem that could affect the All-Dragon Battle that was approaching close, currently her punishment was put on hold.

For the time being Relie avoided jail with only stern warning

given to her temporarily.

"Well, because of that I was made to transport 'that' which was hidden in the academy to here but□□, it's relieving instead that I don't need to manage it more than this."

□□"That?"

Lux reacted to Relie's whisper.

".....Ahaha, it's nothing. Just forget it."

Relie said that with a flustered look along with a stiff wry smile.

Now that she mentioned it□□Saina who came to the academy as a spy from Heiburg was looking for something in the academy. He heard about it from Airi, but was this about that?

"....."

But, Airi didn't move her gaze from the book she opened. Seeing her behaving that it wasn't any concern of her, Lux too didn't pursue any further.

Then, Relie began to talk to varnish over the awkwardness.

"Rather than that, we're finally in the capital, so how about everyone have fun in this city? There is also a festival that will start soon."

"It's the festival for the new kingdom's nation founding anniversary isn't it?"

When Relie muttered that, Celis who exited from the hotel room interjected lightly.

"It seemed that five years ago it was called the empire's holy birthday festival, but right now various things has changed. Not just that name□□but also the festival's content."

As expected from the daughter of a duke of one of the four great nobles, Celis was knowledgeable in various subjects.

"Actually I should also come along with you kids as the one leading this group, but I'm a bit tired. And so, kids who is still energetic can go for a relaxation before the tournament."

Saying that, Relie took out a whole bundle of paper money from her wallet and put it on Lux's hand.

"Tha, thank you very much. □□Wait, this is too much you know!? We don't need this much!"

"My, is that so? Well, you can just return it later if there is leftover."

As expected from the heiress of Aingram family that was a prominent conglomerate even in the new kingdom.

That sense of money was completely different from Lux who was doing odd jobs for these five years.

(Or rather, it will be dangerous instead if we are walking around carrying this much money though.....)

"Come to think of it, this is my first time coming to the capital. Lux-kun, can I ask you to guide me through the city for a bit?"

While Lux was thinking of such thing, Krulcifer who arrived at the entrance asked him that.

"Ah, okay. I don't mind though□□"

When Lux was about to agree readily like that,

"Oi! Don't decide that as you please! I also have plan to borrow Lux after this!"

Lisha cut in and the usual quarrel began.

"There are also some of you who is tired and don't feel like going out, I'll leave that for you to decide among yourself. But□□it will be standing out if you kids are moving in group, so split yourselves into group with four people at most per group, okay?"

With Relie's suggestion, they made groups using lottery and it was immediately decided.

One group was made of Lux, Lisha, Krulcifer, and Airi.

The other group consisted of Celis, Philuffy, Noct, and Sharis.

Tillfur who usually took initiative in going outside couldn't participate because her condition broke down from the long travel. Saying "Heartless people!" she glared resentfully at the other two Triad members.

"We will buy a lot of souvenirs for you."

"Uuu....., don't forget okay?"

Lux consoled his dejected classmate before sallying forth into the capital's city.

Because the time was still afternoon, it seemed there wouldn't be a problem if they didn't go far away.

".....A, right right. The selection members from other country has also come it seems, so do your best to not cause any trouble before the tournament."

Relie said that at the end. Lux and others nodded and exited the inn.

"Then, where should we go first? The place that I want to go first is the Drag-Ride museum at the capital though."

"As always, you don't change at all aren't you..... Don't you have other interest in this rare chance that we have gone as far until the capital?"

"Muu..... Then try saying what do you want to do!? What do you know when it's your first time here!?"

"Let's see. First there are several tailors that are famous even in the capital nearby from here. There are many other shops too, so just looking around is also not bad. Besides, it will be a bit far but if

we go to the national park, there will be a small stream there, it feels like it will be refreshing there. If you feel a little hungry, there is also a street lined up with stalls right there□□the district of craftsman are making and selling things like watch accessories or special handicraft□□"

"Wai, wait a second Krulcifer! Isn't this your first time coming to the capital!?"

Lisha yelled flusteredly toward the girl who was talking continuously without pause.

"What I said just now are courses that are comparatively common when sightseeing in the capital you know? How about you also do a little investigation so that you have something to talk with the other nobles too?"

"Kuh.....!? Back at you, you actually don't need any guide right from the start right!? You vulgar girl, that was just your excuse to invite Lux!"

Lisha spontaneously yelled when she saw Krulcifer telling her like that with a cool tone.

She was inadvertently more knowledgeable than Lux who was supposedly living in the capital at the past.

"Then for now, should we leave it to Krulcifer-san?"

As expected, even Airi too didn't seem to be that knowledgeable about the capital's layout. In the end they had fun in the capital's street following Krulcifer's escort.

Part 2

A few hours later.

They went around a lot more places than they expected and by this time the sun had already went down completely.

Lux and others, the four people were taking dinner in a large

eatery nearby the main street.

As expected from an eating place that had existed for many years in the capital, the meal was delicious without anything to complain about. The four were reminiscing about their day but□□.

"Oi oi, I beg you lad. Don't sleep in this kind of place! Also you're drinking too much."

When they were thinking to leave soon, they could hear the troubled voice of the owner from the corner.

"Ain't no one is sleeping here..... Just shut up and bring more sake here□. Munya....."

A male was lifting up a wooden beer mug while speaking with a tone that was obviously dead drunk from anyone's point of view.

His age was still young. The young man's trait was his dull blonde forelock that was bristled up as though frayed, and his sanpaku eyes. (TN: Eyes with visible white between the iris and the lower eyelid)

He was wearing durable looking black shirt and trouser.

Within that simple appearance, it was only the rustic silver sword belt on his waist that was standing out.

Looking only from his looks, he looked like a rude thug, but perhaps because of his child-face that had no ill-will in it, he didn't give that bad of an impression.

"To begin with, are you in the age that can drink alcohol huh lad? You look really young."

"It's okay. My principle is 'reckless challenge' yeah..... Being reckless without conservativeness is what gonna open the new path□□uppuh"

"You're over your limit there!? By the way lad, you look like a traveler, but where are you come from?"

"Who care□s, just pour more drink. After all I cannot drink back home see□..... I'm told today is a rare festival in the capital yea□? Don't be so stingy□"

"The nation founding anniversary is still two more days. Rather than that, you look young but do you got money on you?"

When the young man grumbled with bright red face, the owner sighed and asked.

Lisha beside Lux whispered in exasperation while watching that scene from distance.

"I thought that only nobles came to the capital, but there are also quite a lot of country bumpkin huh."

"Your voice is loud you know, princess."

When Krulcifer chided curtly like that, an incident occurred.

"Look here, even like this I got money y'know□. I earned a lot from my work□□"

The young man took out a wallet from his trouser's pocket. The moment he put it on the table, a middle-aged man drinking alcohol behind him stood up and moved suddenly.

"□□□□"

Drunkenness reflexively vanished from the young man's expression and his hand reached at his sword's handle.

But, when the middle-aged man reached out at the wallet, the man snatched it in the blink of eye and vanished to outside the restaurant.

After a tense moment, a small commotion filled the restaurant.

"Aah-ah, he got you there lad. That kind of fellow ain't someone you usually find in the capital, but robber who came here in this kind of time from various place y'know."

With a complicated look, the restaurant owner told so to the young man whose wallet was stolen.

"....."

Lux who had experience doing odd jobs many times at the capital had recollection of it.

Before and after the country founding anniversary or the tournaments including All-Dragon Battle, the population of the capital that was already a lot even under normal circumstances would increase explosively.

Nobles and travelers would gather to watch the event from various places of new kingdom□□or even from the foreign countries.

And then, the robbers would also gather into the capital, aiming for their wallet.

But, the capital was different from Cross Field. Although its size was vast but there was unexpectedly few hiding place there.

The streets were systematic due to the wisdom from the past in order to be able to corner hostile individual and captured them.

".....I'll go for a bit."

Lux pulled back his chair with a clatter and stood up.

"Oi wait, where are you going Lux!? Don't tell me□□"

When Lisha called out in surprise, Lux was rushing out of the restaurant.

"I can predict where the thief will escape in general, so everyone go back first to the inn!"

Lux only said that and then ran out without giving the girls any time to stop him.

Chasing after the man's footsteps and presence, Lux moved from

the main street into a complicated back alley.

When he arrived at the end of a gloomy alley some distance away from the bar, he found an unexpected sight there.

"Chih! Someone caught up already, but□□"

The man just now who Lux thought as a mere thief summoned a Wyvern Drag-Ride and wore it.

"-.....!"

Because using Drag-Ride in the capital would stand out, this was something that took Lux by surprise.

However, if the thief could escape for the moment to the sky, it would be hard to catch him when he went away from the capital.

"□□Come, the symbol of power the winged dragon of crest. Obey my sword and take flight, Wyvern"

This is the first time Lux summoned Drag-Ride since he used Over Limit.

His use of Wyvern also doubled as light rehabilitation, but physically it was as though there was no problem at all.

(.....I can do this!)

Lux ascertained the sensation of wearing Drag-Ride while flying in pursuit of the thief's flying Wyvern.

The thief held his breath for an instant in order to further accelerate his Drag-Ride.

Lux didn't overlook that opening and he lifted up his Scale Blade, it was then,

"□□Oi prince, I'll be first okay?"

A voice with a tone that had peculiar mannerism in it came. Along with it, the thief's Wyvern in front of him was struck down.

".....!?"

There an unfamiliar Drag-Ride□□a Drag-Ride with countless scale-like armor attached on it was taking stance with a Blade that was strangely curved.

(This is□□!)

It was a male Divine Drag-Ride user that was rarely seen other than Lux himself.

Because female's aptitude with Drag-Ride was far higher than male, Drag-Knight that could skillfully use Divine Drag-Ride that was difficult to control and consumed energy intensely was few in number even throughout the world, but□□this young man, even in his completely drunken state, he controlled his Drag-Ride with precision and knocked down the enemy in an instant.

"Gu, gahah.....a!"

The knocked down thief writhed from the impact and he didn't look like he could take anymore action.

The blonde young man who saw that was about to deal additional attack below him.

"I'm not gonna kill you cause it'll be troublesome, but I'll at least take both your arms."

The large Blade with strange curve was going to sever the thief's arms from the elbow just as the young man proclaimed, but then□□,

".....!?"

GIIN!

The blade was deflected along with a high-pitched metallic sound.

Lux's Scale Blade blocked the Blade that they young man swung down.

"□□Stop. This person cannot move anymore. More than this is meaningless."

The young man's eyes opened wide for a moment in surprise, but he soon stared at Lux with an ironic wry smile.

"That's really naïve, prince. That line is really unthinkable coming from the survivor of that Arcadia Empire's imperial family that was extolled as inhuman yeah."

Contrary to his words, the young man obediently dispelled his armor and sheathed back his Sword Device into his sword belt.

Because the thief had already fainted, Lux also dispelled his armor next after checking the surrounding vigilantly.

And then, once more Lux faced the young man confronting him still with a smile on his face.

"You know? About me□□"

"You're a bit of celebrity at the neighboring country y'know? Even a slacking guy like me know that much."

"....."

The young man's sharp gaze caused Lux to tense up his expression too.

Arcadia Empire reached out its hand not only within its vast territory, but also to the surrounding territorial water and island. At the time various skirmishes happened repeatedly with many countries at the surrounding.

There were still many foreign countries that held grudge against the imperial family that was the main culprit of that.

When strange silence and strained atmosphere were flowing between the two□□,

"Oooi! What are you doing, Greifer!"

A bit high soprano voice resounded in the back alley the two were at.

The one who arrived was a young man that was his same age with an androgynous face.

"Aaa-aa. The troublesome guy came..... I'll introduce him, he is my staff officer and also the one tasked wiping my ass, the great Coral-sama."

"What stupid thing you're saying! Just how many times I told you already not to draw your Sword Device inside the capital!?"

The young man who was called Coral yelled angrily at Greifer before turning toward Lux.

"Are you all right Lux!? You are weak right now, that's why forcing yourself is□□"

Lisha and others came running slightly behind, but they stiffened when seeing the duo facing Lux.

"What do we have here, the selection members of the new kingdom is also coming eh. Hey there."

"You two, who are you....."

When Lisha questioned with a slightly tense voice, Greifer showed a sarcastic smile.

"Ain't introducing from yourself the polite thing to do? But yeah certainly, I ain't this country's person.....gofuh!"

Bam, Greifer pitched forward due to the strong hit from Coral on his back.

As though to replace him, the young man called Coral moved to stand before Lux and others.

"Please forgive my colleague's rudeness. We are the selection members of Vanheim Dukedom. Nice to meet all of you."

The young man greeted with a refined voice and gesture. Lux and others faltered for a moment.

"He is our leader, Greifer. My name is Coral. We has only arrived the other day but□□forgive us for causing a ruckus."

It seemed that different from Greifer who had a peculiar personality, this young man named Coral was really amicable.

"We don't need to apologize here Coral. In the first place, I'm just trying to catch the thief stealing my wallet□□"

"It's forbidden to drink alcohol at our expedition destination isn't it, Greifer? I'll tell about this matter to the instructor later. I think that this time won't end up with only training as your punishment, so you better prepare yourself."

"Uwaa!? What are you gonna do if we lose the All-Dragon Battle because of this huh!? Oi Coral! Think again about it□□"

Coral shut the fussing Greifer's mouth with his hand while facing Lux and others once more.

"I'm sorry to bother you, but can I ask everyone to take care of the thief sleeping there?"

Lux took a step forward toward the awkwardly smiling Coral and replied.

"Yes. We will hand him over to the guards. Perhaps that way will be less troublesome in various things."

"Thank you. Well then, we will have to trouble you with that."

"Ah, the wallet..... It was falling there."

"Ah, I'm sorry. But, we've been a bother to everyone, so□□please, I hope everyone can have a nice dinner with this."

Coral said that while taking out several piece of paper money from Greifer's wallet.

"Oi! Don't take out other's money as you please! I didn't say anything about giving□□"

Coral ignored the protesting voice from behind him and offered the money to Lux with a smile, but,

"We didn't do anything, so it's fine. Rather than that, something like this happened out of nowhere, but if you could please not hate the new kingdom because of it.....it will make me glad."

Coral's eyes instantly opened wide after hearing Lux's words that were said with a wry smile.

".....It's surprising."

Coral whispered that accompanied with a small admiration.

"Eh.....?"

"You are completely different from the imperial family of the old empire that I've been hearing."

Coral said that with a smile. He then held out his right hand toward Lux quietly.

For a moment Lux didn't understand his gesture, but when he understood that it was for handshake, Lux responded. Coral grasped his hand back smilingly.

His androgynous handsome look looked like a girl. Lux felt his heart throbbed slightly.

".....-!?"

Instantly, heat flickered and burned his brain, as though electricity was flowing behind his yes.

His consciousness was getting farther away, as though he was suddenly entering inside a sandstorm.

".....Is something wrong?"

"Ah, no. It's nothing□□"

Lux immediately separated his hand from Coral's right after he spoke to him, and the pain settled down.

Lux wondered just what in the world that was just now.

"Then, let's meet again at the All-Dragon Battle."

Coral brought the talk to finish like that and he took away Greifer from the back alley.

Lux finally breathed out in relieve. At that moment, Lisha who had handed over the fainted thief to the guards quietly arrived in front of him.

"Oi Lux. You were holding that guy's hand for really long there.....I'll say this just in case, that guy just now is a man you know?"

Lisha said that to him with twitching gaze that looked doubtful.

"I, I know that. That much is□□"

"It's unexpected that Lux-kun has interest in that direction. It's no wonder that your reaction is weak against my advance."

"Wai-!? Even Krulcifer-san, just what are you saying!?"

"You're panicking like that make it even more suspicious. Well, putting aside the joke□□they are formidable enemy aren't they?"

Airi concluded like that while taking a final shot at Lux while she was at it.

Lux was also in agreement regarding that.

"Especially that one who was called Greifer, if I remember correctly he is the candidate for 'Seven Dragon Paladin' of Vanheim Dukedom."

".....Seven Dragon Paladin?"

"That kind of talk was suddenly announced while Lux-kun was forced to bed."

When Lux tilted his head in puzzlement hearing those unfamiliar words, Krulcifer quietly taught him what it was about.

"The talk is about forming an organization where every country is cooperating to oppose the threat of Abyss that is increasing every year. About the Seven Dragon Paladin, they are the Drag-Knights where each country will select one person as their representation in that organization."

After hearing the further detail from Airi, it seemed that there was still time until the Seven Dragon Paladin was selected, but there were already several countries that put out their candidate's name.

"That guy's personality is a bit like that but, he looks troublesome huh.Rather than that let's go back, I'm sleepy."

"You're right."

Lisha yawned 'fua' with a cute gesture. Lux smiled wryly to that and nodded in agreement.

After that they went back straight to the inn without stopping anywhere and retired to bed.

Part 3

At the territorial waters slight distance away from the new kingdom.

At that place that had a lot of reef and even fishing boat couldn't approach, a huge building was hidden within the cover of fog.

Inside□□countless metal objects were lining up in a spacious space. Several silhouettes were there.

One was a silver haired girl wearing jet black robe□□Hayes.

A blue haired maid was standing at her side, Mishis.

The last was a tall and slender man looking at everything with a distant look, Fugil.

"The entire plan is progressing favorably, but can I ask you to rethink it again, your highness Hayes?"

".....What is?"

When the maid called Mishis addressed her, Hayes responded while still lying prostrated on the round table at the center.

"Certainly its necessary to offer your blood and mind to control the Artifact(Transforming Weapon), but as I thought it's too reckless. Even if bring them down thoroughly until the root, but if your life is□□"

"So what?"

When Hayes responded with a displeased look, Fugil who was standing while leaning on the wall until now walked toward the table at the center.

"She is merely worrying about your highness the imperial princess. At the previous battle, our greatest pawn that is necessary for the 'imperial capital recapture plan'□□the Yggdrasil was defeated. Of course, if we invest our whole war potential, it'll be possible to defeat them even then. But, your highness will be forced to lose a lot of your time as the compensation of that."

".....Oi Fugil. When your parent's enemy die from sickness, can you then laughed it off and get happy with that?"

"Unfortunately, I'm someone without a single relative."

Fugil smoothly answered Hayes's question that was mixed with irritation inside.

But, Hayes ignored that and showed a distorted wicked smile on her lips.

"A low-life like you won't get it, but if it's me that's impossible. What you call revenge has worth only if you do it by your own hand and nobody else. Hiring a hit man to do it? Waiting for chance until he is killed by someone? □□ That's not it, something like that has no value at all. If I don't drag out those guys in front of me by these hands and kill them myself, then it ain't got any meaning at all!"

Hayes's asymmetrically colored eyes snapped wide open and she yelled.

"That's□□"

"Stop there, don't give me any pointless talk. It's a story you cannot possibly understand. For the lowest and worst traitor who cut down all those bunches who can even be called as your blood relative□□"

"....."

Fugil returned a fearless smile at the words that Hayes spat out.

".....Get it? I won't borrow your hand in my revenge. You just work like slave until you die like usual for the sake of our empire, that's the only compassion that can be given to you who is of that family."

"By your will. Without any doubt, I am an ally of all of you."

Hayes scowled seeing the humble Fugil.

Almost at the same time, the metallic door at the back automatically opened and a girl came in.

It was a girl with ears that looked like bird feather, wearing an unfamiliar outfit.

"The Artifact's activation as well as the tuning of the Divine Drag-Ride is completed, my lord(creator)."

The girl informed with no pause between her words and robotic voice that didn't contain emotion.

"□□Can it work? Gear Leader El Fajura. That's including the two original special functions that you have."

"It's possible to execute as planned."

After the girl called El Fajura nodded, Hayes's lips crooked into a smile and she stood up.

"I see, then we're moving. In order to accomplish our longstanding desire and retake that."

Hayes reached her hand toward the small half-sphere object at the middle of the round table.

Instantly that half-sphere was tinged with faint light. Lines of light were circulating along the floor and wall like spider web that was spreading from the center.

Right after that, the wall itself fiercely shook and the exterior started moving on the whole.

Part 4

On the other side, the capital at night.

After Lux and co returned to the high class hotel they reserved, the reunited selection members and Airi were called by Relie and everyone gathered at the entrance.

Perhaps because she had received a lot of souvenir, or perhaps because she had rested properly, Tillfur had recovered her liveliness. That was something good but□□.

"Then without delay, let's have Lux-kun announce who is the girls who has worked hard at the training camp the other day and will receive the prize."

"□□Eh!?"

The very first sentence that Relie spoke out caused Lux's mouth to drop wide open without closing.

It seemed that it was also unexpected for the other girls too, because everyone stiffened simultaneously.

"My, everyone is cold isn't it? Didn't you all work hard at the training camp for this?"

"N, no....., that's, well it's true but"

Even Tillfur who would normally play along with the mood was replying with a somewhat bewildered feeling.

Lux too had completely forgotten about it until now, but certainly there was such promise between him and everyone.

It was a competition between the members who received Lux's individual guidance at the training camp in Ries Island, about who would be the one who could safely complete the assignment given to them.

The first three name who could complete their assignment first would be able to specially make individual request to Lux as their reward, that was the promise (that Relie arbitrarily decided), but□□.

"Actually, the plan was to immediately decide it right after we returned from the training camp, but then Lux-kun was really tired, and the situation also didn't allow it. And so, can I ask you to announce the result here."

"Uu....."

Everyone's gaze gathered on Lux after Relie's words. Lux hesitated to speak.

He reflexively wanted to say "Can I say it later?", but seeing the eyes of the members around him that were filled with expectation and nervousness, it didn't look like he could escape.

He took a deep breath, then he recalled the training scene at the training camp□□and the activity of the girls after they returned to Cross Field.

"Then□□eerr, first is....."

And then he announced the three names after hesitating about it.

Part 5

"□□Even so, I wonder what kind of business Lux-chi is called for? What's more it's this late at night~."

"Who knows. Well, it's a summon from the government, so it's not something strange I think."

Inside one room in the inn where the members were staying, Tillfur's muttering was answered by Sharis.

The three members of Triad were sitting down together on the bed inside the room that they were sharing while Tillfur who was wearing her sleepwear was tilting her head in puzzlement.

Only a few minutes ago, right after Lux announced the three names who accomplished their assignment, a messenger from the castle arrived at the inn that the selection members were reserving.

Lux and Airi were the ones summoned. The government had an important talk with them.

"However it's unfortunate isn't it? For Tillfur too, even though you worked that hard, you weren't selected as one of the three."

"Uwaaa.....don't say it please, it makes me down. The rivals are just too strong....."

Tillfur's expression was clouded from Sharis's consolation and she sighed.

"Yes. □□But, I did everything I could, Sharis and Tillfur too. I judged that there is nothing for us to feel shame about."

Noct who was reading book quietly whispered that with her expressionless look unchanging.

"This is pretty much concerning my dignity as a third year though. After all I'm setting a bad example that I lost to my junior in completing the assignment. □□I lost completely. But rather than that, it's unexpected that even Noct also wanted the prize."

"No. I don't really have any request that I want to ask from Lux-san. But, I wanted to proof my effort, in that meaning it's unfortunate. Because Lux-san's instruction and assignment were accurate."

"It doesn't matter anymore~. It's over anyway for use□□"

When Tillfur rolled around sulkily, Noct sent her an exasperated gaze.

"No. □□The crucial moment will be from tomorrow. The All-Dragon Battle in the capital□□it will be great if nothing happen."

"You're right. Let us do what we can do. Also, don't complain at Lux-kun okay? After all the one who is always working the hardest is none other than him."

After the leader Sharis concluded like that in the end, Tillfur and Noct didn't raise anymore voice of complain.

"Oh, even though it's already this time, it looks like it's going to rain isn't it?"

Sharis suddenly muttered so when she stared at the window outside.

Ahead of her gaze were the lamps of the people living in the capital that were numbered far more compared to Cross Field.

Part 6

"□□And, to start off. To congratulate this critical juncture that is the fifth year since the founding of the new kingdom, I.....haa, I'm tired."

On the other hand, inside another individual room in the inn,

Lisha was reading a document.

Because they reserved the inn, they could choose to share room with someone, but Lisha wanted to spend her time alone just for today.

The largish note in Lisha's hand contained the writing for her greeting at the new kingdom's founding anniversary.

Until now Lisha avoided her work as a princess as much as possible, but this time she couldn't do that and she reluctantly consented.

"Even so, just why didn't Lux choose me!? Even though everyday I'm working hard until late at night in order to improve that guy's Bahamut.....geez."

She was dissatisfied that she wasn't chosen among the three names who accomplished Lux's assignment and received the reward to make request, but because Lux had already complied with her selfishness, she also thought that it couldn't be helped.

'Fuu', Lisha leaked out a small sigh and threw herself on the bed wearing her sleepwear.

"It's depressing doing this public greeting. From the start I don't have the awareness as a princess, and yet□□"

Even so, she could run away from the matter and responsibility before her.

"We, well but.....to announce about that thing with Lux, as expected, I have to do this greeting huh."

Lisha imagined about that with faintly blushing cheeks before she muttered somewhat brusquely.

She had already received the consent from her stepmother Queen Raffi too.

She heard that half of the capital's consuls were in opposition, but it seemed that it was somehow accepted.

If it went as planned, the founding anniversary the day after tomorrow would become the day where she would officially announce it.

"□□I can't wait. With this Lux will become my knight."

She whispered as though to test how it sounded and she ruminated the words.

The hapless fate where the existence of old empire stole her position before she was then placed on the seat of the princess of the new kingdom.

Because of that chronology and upbringing, she was unable to familiarize herself with the position as the new kingdom's princess.

The one who saved her from that was none other than a 'man' who she thought as her enemy, the prince of the old empire Lux. That was why it was a mysterious fate at work.

"Besides, he was also considerate to me at the training camp before. He is really kind."

Lisha's lips slackened abruptly. She laid down on the feathers bed and looked up to the ceiling.

".....But that man, he look sincere from a glance, but he is really a pervert. It's a bit uneasy with him only becoming my knight."

Lisha whispered such thing while lightly closing her eyes and thought about Lux.

If she showed some understanding in that area as a 'woman', Lux would surely feel satisfied wouldn't he?

'Tha, that's□□. Lisha-sama's body, even though it's small statured, but it's feminine and really sexy but still cute, honestly speaking it excited me.....'

".....Uwah!? Am I an idiot!? Ju, just what am I thinking, geez!"

After Lisha recalled a past conversation, she yelled with a bright

red face and she came back to her senses.

"Come back quickly already, Lux."

Lisha slowly put her hand on her chest while she whispered with her eyes closing.

Part 7

In another different room.

Inside that room that was extravagantly decorated typical of a high class hotel, Krulcifer was changing into her sleepwear while combing her hair in front of a mirror.

Because Krulcifer's homeland, the religious country Ymir also participated in the All-Dragon Battle, the maid of Einfolk family, Alterize would also come to this inn. She was already notified of that through a letter.

At the training camp in Ries island, she was instructed by Lux about overcoming her decisive blow insufficiency.

Her highly accurate marksmanship using long distance Rifle, and her offense and defense that was making use of Fafnir's armament and mobility produced a battle style that left no opening.

She was strong enough with just that. Even in the capital's tournament, it could be asserted that there was almost no one who could best Krulcifer.

But, she had a weak point. Her attack was light.

She would be fairly in advantage if she could attack the Force Core of enemy's Drag-Ride with her accurate shot, but in real battle it wouldn't go that conveniently.

If she was facing against Drag-Ride that possessed powerful barrier like Azi Dahaka or an Abyss that was resistance against ice ability appeared, her offensive option would be severely limited.

She also could handle other weapon like Blade more or less, but that couldn't become her finishing move.

After they returned to the academy, she directly showed Lux the answer to the assignment he gave her. With that she splendidly won the right to make a special request to Lux.

If it was seen just from that, then it was a really good result, but□□,

"This situation, it's not something that I can really be happy about without reserve."

She let out a small sigh and laid down on the bed face up.

She was looking up to the ceiling that was still new without a single stain on it while recalling Lux's statement.

He said that he would become the exclusive knight of the new kingdom's princess, Lizsharte.

"Perhaps, I'm looking at this a bit too naively."

If Lux was formally appointed as Lisha's exclusive knight, he would be repeatedly recruited to Lisha's official business. And depending on the situation, he would be attending Lisha constantly.

Of course, while they were still military cadet who weren't burdened with that much official business, there wouldn't be that much turn for that.

But, she couldn't erase the feeling that the other side had overtaken her by a step.

"□□I wonder if I too has become bad at keeping up appearances."

Krulcifer smiled wryly while questioning herself.

Lux himself had a complicated circumstance and past that connected the new kingdom and the old empire. Most likely he himself had an objective that he was trying to accomplish.

Just like Krulcifer who wished to know about the true identity of herself who came from the Ruin.

Because of that she was thinking to deepen her relationship with Lux by respecting his will that wanted to become the new kingdom's strength at the present, but□□.

"To be unable to say what I want to do if there is no reason. I too haven't changed."

Krulcifer was deriding herself like that with a cool smile before she woke up.

She was the only human that was discovered inside a Ruin.

She was taken and raised inside other people's family. She was an outsider that was shunned by that family.

That was why she worked hard to be recognized. After that effort ended in vain, she tried to live without relying on anyone, but,

"Perhaps, this is the first time I was able to feel wanting to rely on a person."

She silently whispered so and spread the map of the capital on her desk.

The diligent Krulcifer had already memorized the simple sketch of the area around the block they were currently at, but she was jotting down even more detailed information by hand.

Yesterday she was able to escort Lux and others without hesitation was also the fruit of her hard work of properly doing the preliminary investigation.

"I'm looking forward to the anniversary the day after tomorrow."

She whispered with a voice that no one could hear.

She had already decided the content of the special request she would make to Lux.

Part 8

And then, in further another room, where Philuffy, Celis, and Relie, the three people were sharing room.

There was still empty room in the hotel, but Celis didn't choose a private room and stayed at the same room with Philuffy and Relie. There were several reasons for this.

One, she was asked by Relie herself to be her observer because she had caused trouble last time.

The other reason because Relie was worried about the Abyss factor residing inside Philuffy's body.

About that itself there wasn't any particular problem, but now there was a bigger problem than that.

"This is.....a bit troubling."

Celis whispered after opening the letter that was handed from the messenger who arrived just now and confirmed the content.

It was a secret message sent by one of the four great nobles, Celis's father□□Dist Ralgris.

"My, it's rare for someone of your level to be worried? If you're alright with us, then please let us take part in consultation but□□"

Philuffy at the neighboring bed also nodded in response to Relie's statement.

The gaze of Philuffy who lifted up her upper body on the bed was directed on a book page regarding business company.

"N, no, this is, that's.....it's about something that I should resolve myself."

Celis answered in panic before her gaze returned to the letter from her father on her bed.

The content of the letter talked about Ralgris house wanting to

invite the criminal Lux to their house for once in order to protect his position.

Further than that, the letter also commanded Celis to make use of her relation with Lux in Syvalles to make him associate with Ralgris house in the meeting they would participate in, and also for Celis herself to proactively give Lux guidance.

"Wha, what could this be about? As expected, for me to bring Lux to Ralgris's house is□□, it make my heart beat fast for some reason."

When Celis unconsciously raised her voice in reaction to that description, Rleie who was sleeping inside the same room twitched in reaction and her complexion changed.

"N, no..... It's nothing at all so.....!"

Celis was making excuse with awkward fast-talking while thinking.

(Really, just what could Chichi-ue possibly think.....) (TN: Chichi-ue = a more archaic way to call father)

She talked to her father about the case of Lux becoming the member of the academy's raid unit, Syvalles, but this letter's content was slightly strange.

For a noble to invite outsider into their house had quite the meaning.

Especially if the one doing it was one of the four great nobles, for Dist who had brought to her several talk about engagement or marriage interview, to purposefully tell her to bring Lux to their house, it was something unlikely under usual circumstances.

Was he trying to involve Lux into some kind of big trouble?

Or else, could it possibly be□□.

"Tha, that's something that I still cannot permit! Lux still, hasn't taught me a lot about male..... Ce, certainly he is a male that is closest to me but, something like be, betrothal, as expected it's still

too□□"

gata-! At that moment Relie stood up from her bed with a pale expression.

"That talk□□can you tell me about it in more detail, Celis-san?"

"N, no! Just now is my misunderstanding, so it will help if you can forget about it for me!"

Celis made excuse in panic, but Relie showed a twitching smile and sighed deeply.

".....I see. No matter how dull Celis-san is in regard of love, but I've been a bit careless. And, what are you going to do about your request toward Lux-kun?"

Relie suddenly questioned like that. In respond Celis was,

"Fo, for now, I have to consult about a certain matter to Lux so, that's□□I'm thinking to ask him to make some time at the recess day of the All-Dragon Battle."

"I see□□the All-Dragon Battle's recess, that means the new kingdom's founding anniversary. At that day, you will go in a date with Lux while progressing the talk until betrothal. What a really terrifying plan.....!"

"Just what are you talking about headmaster!? It's not like I□□"

Relie whose thought was heated up even more from hearing Celis's plan was walking to the front of Philuffy who was already looking sleepy.

"Phi. Until now I was preparing an environment that was like in the past for you and Lux-kun so that you two can slowly deepen your relationship while expecting Lux-kun to commit a mistake, but□□now that it has come to this there is no other way."

"Headmaster, just now, it feels like I was hearing strange words that are terribly unwholesome though.....?"

Celis retorted with a complicated look, but Relie didn't pay it any mind and called out to Philuffy.

"I wonder what should you ask Lux-kun for with the special request? Preparing an environment where you can approach him more proactively is□□"

"Onee-chan. Noisy."

Relie stiffened into a statue hearing the sudden word that Philuffy whispered with her unchanging serious look.

Philuffy's tone was indifferent like usual, so it didn't sound like she was particularly angry, but as expected Relie still received a shock.

"I, I'm sorry Phi. But, it's not like I want to trouble you and Lux-kun. Rather it's, I want to help just for a bit, for the sake of the future of you two□□"

"I, already decided, my request to Lu-chan."

Her expression and tone were absentminded like usual.

However, she asserted so without any hesitation. After that Philuffy's gaze dropped to the book once more.

"Phi. You've grown....."

Perhaps sensing something from Philuffy's attitude, Relie stared at Philuffy deeply moved.

"How should I say it, I wish to be permitted to move to another room tomorrow....."

Celis also took a deep breath after watching that scene with a complicated expression.

"Date, is it..... That, I heard that it is something man and woman will do before marriage but..... Walking with a man just the two of us in the city, as I thought, that will make me nervous."

Celis averted her face from Relie and Philuffy and whispered softly so that she wouldn't be heard.

The young man who saved her by removing the shackle that was the sin and righteousness she was burdened with.

Because of Relie's misunderstanding, the thinking of 'what if' was accelerating inside her mind on its own accord.

(A, as I thought this thinking isn't wholesome□□it's not permitted.)

Imagining herself having a date with Lux, Celis covered her own lips in panic with her sheet.

Part 9

Around the same time.

While the girls were thinking about what they should do with the reward of special request□□Lux and Airi passed through the castle gate and stepped inside the castle.

The hustle and bustle of people remained in the night air in preparation for the All-Dragon Battle that would start tomorrow and the new kingdom's founding anniversary the day after that.

Lux was wrapped with strange nervousness when he entered inside the castle after almost five years.

The chalk white structure that were inherited from the building since the era of old empire was this country's government office.

Inside the spacious assembly hall that was illuminated by lamp's lighting, a great number of consuls were already assembled.

The seating was placed to left and right in stair shape. A red carpet was laid down on the pathway.

Lux and Airi were standing on a platform at the lowest level□□where they were stared down from the stair model seating

facing them.

"You must be tired from the long travel, former Arcadia Empire's seventh imperial prince Lux Arcadia. And then his little sister Airi Arcadia."

"We have arrived in accordance to the invitation."

Lux responded like that to the consuls addressing him and bowed.

Their seating was enveloped in ultramarine colored darkness. From where Lux was standing, he couldn't see the face of everyone there.

Originally their face should be visible. But for Lux who was completely distant from the capital after the founding of the new kingdom, he didn't even know most of their face and name.

"So, what business do you have with us?"

Airi who was behind Lux asked the question with a voice that was slightly tinged with nervousness.

The messenger who came to their inn before this only told them 'It's an important talk'.

At that point it was undeniable that it was suspicious, but seeing this many consuls gathering like this, that suspicion turned into conviction.

"What a hasty young lady. □□ Well, certainly it's the night before the All-Dragon Battle, it will be pitiful to make you accompany us for a long talk. Oi, prime minister-dono."

The one who urged on with such large voice was a big man with red hair, one of the four great nobles, a man called Bugriser.

Even Lux who wasn't that knowledgeable about the politic in the new kingdom recognized the four great nobles' feudal lords who controlled the vast territory in the four directions since the era of the old empire.

Even their personality and their way of doing thing.

"Do you remember my face? I'm the prime minister who serves as the aide of her majesty the queen, Nulph. We are expressly summoning the two of you here like this is just as you suspected, because we wish you to listen to an important matter that still cannot be disclosed to the people of this country. 'Imperial capital recapture plan'□□it's the plot of Heiburg Republic."

".....-!?"

Lux and Airi's expression changed from Prime Minister Nulph's words.

"A notice has come from the spy we sent to Heiburg, we understand the specific of the plan. It seems that the enlarged military division of Heiburg will enforce it. The plan will be carried out before long□□perhaps even right after the end of this All-Dragon Battle. They will take advantage of the opening when the security of the new kingdom will be short of hand."

Nulph was reading from the document on his hand dispassionately.

"But, Heiburg's troops won't attack directly. The remnants who sought asylum there and wished for the restoration of Arcadia Empire□□the rebel army will become the ringleader at the surface."

"The rebel army that escaped to Heiburg will come attacking the new kingdom. So that means, don't tell me....."

Airi whispered with a trembling voice. Prime Minister Nulph nodded silently to that.

"It's just as you surmised. If Heiburg's pet, the rebel army take down the capital, it will become the start of the indirect rule of Heiburg's military division. That's the only thing that we have to avoid at all cost."

□□The remnants of the old empire.

In other words this was the rebel army's imperial capital

recapture plan against the new kingdom.

Their objective was to destroy the pillar of the new kingdom and then bloomed a second time as ruler once more, but they were actually being used by Heiburg Republic's military division to invade the new kingdom.

Furthermore it was obvious that the Black Marketer Hayes was deeply involved in this.

"The supreme commander of the rebel army that became Heiburg's pawn is, a man called Ragreed Forus I believe?"

"□□Eh?"

A hoarse voice abruptly came from the edge of the parliamentary seat.

The owner of that voice was one of the four great nobles, Zagha Schultzed. Lux reacted to the words he said.

Ragreed Forus.

He was once a high noble that was in the empire faction, a man who was the best friend of Lux's older brother Abel.

And then, he was also the man who once attempted to make Philuffy into a scapegoat at the imperial court.

Five years ago when the old empire perished, his whereabouts became unknown, but to think he was escaping to Heiburg□□.

"Oo, come to think of it, Lux-dono, if I remember correctly□□you were acquainted with him I believe? At the surface he is the leader of the rebel army, but it seems he is the one leading the whole army to attack here you know?"

The destiny between him with Ragreed Forus from their childhood.

The man who inherited the ideology of the old empire markedly appeared leading the rebel army as the supreme commander of the

imperial capital recapture plan.

But rather than that information itself, it was the fact that this information was told to him right now in this place that made him sensed a certain omen.

"And.....what do you want me to do?"

"Hohou. As expected from a former prince, although you were estranged from politic for five years already, but you possess a profound discernment. Have you predicted it from what we said just now?"

"You ought to stop with the foolish preface, Lord Zagha."

The voice of a gentleman in the prime of his life interrupted Zagha who was letting out admiration while continuing.

One of the four great nobles, Dist Ralgris.

He is the father of Syvalles's captain, Celis.

"Just as we explained, this country is in the verge of unprecedented danger. In order to prevent that, we wish to borrow your strength, as the trump card against the imperial capital recapture plan."

"What kind of role I'll have more specifically?"

Lux replied shortly and waited for the answer. Dist paused shortly before continuing the talk.

"I have heard about your true strength and deeds of arms from my daughter. Yes, of course I knew about the rumor from the royal capital's tournament(official mock battle), but I never thought that your strength is to the degree of being able to repulse Ragnarok."

"....."

Lux responded to that with silence.

At first glance it was a compliment to him, but he couldn't get

carried away and said anything unnecessary.

The matter of a seed of Abyss was inserted into Philuffy's body and that the seed's host, Yggdrasil had been defeated were significant secrets that were only known to Lux and co.

Abyss was subjugation target by law. That law applied not just in the new kingdom, but anywhere.

Therefore, he absolutely had to avoid from saying anything careless and caused the secret to become known.

"Other than that, I also heard the report that you saved the students many times from Abyss's assault to the academy, and you were victorious against Lord Barzeride in an one-on-one duel. There is already no doubt that you are a prominent Drag-Knight even among the men of the new kingdom. □□Therefore, we judged that it is possible if it's you."

Dist stopped his calm praising words and changed his tone into a strict one.

"From the scout's report, a hundred Abyss that appears to be the battle strength for the sake of this imperial capital recapture plan are already hiding in an abandoned village northwest from this royal capital."

".....Wha-!?"

That terrifying information that was said really naturally caused Lux and Airi's body to tremble in shock.

Even just several Abyss were hiding strength that could easily destroy a single village without Drag-Ride to oppose them.

If several dozen Abyss were rampaging in the capital unchecked, it would brought danger of destruction in one night just from that.

"Is that information□□true?"

"For the Abysses to quietly lurking in an abandoned village, there is no doubt that the treasure called 'horn flute' that was used by a

rebel army's commanding officer you once brought down is in use here. The execution day of the imperial capital recapture plan will be the next day after the end of the All-Dragon Battle. It's necessary for us to be a step ahead of the rebel army and exterminated the Abysses before they can be used to attack here. Therefore□□"

Dist cut off his words for a moment and gazed at Lux, then, he told him.

"Lux Arcadia. We will have you to take on the role as the decoy to lure all one hundred Abyss."

".....!?"

"Ple, please stop with the joke Lord Dist! That's impossible! No matter how, for my brother alone to face such large army is□□"

Airi pleaded in panic right after Lux held his breath.

But, all the consuls including Dist resumed the talk as though nothing happened.

"We have sent a scout to the abandoned village and confirmed that fact. This role can only be carried out by you, the Weakest Undeclared□□the one who excelled in defense more than any Drag-Knight. And then of course, we don't intent to leave it to you to annihilate all of the Abysses. You will lure the Abysses until a hidden fortress located at the north of the new kingdom, then the army unit standing by there will strike down the Abysses with concentrated fire. That's the plan."

"....."

"This plan didn't come from my own discretion. It's a conclusion that was hammered in a war council that reflected the opinion of her majesty the queen and all the consuls here. The execution of this mission will be the next morning after the founding anniversary. We will crush the Abyss swarm that is the keystone of the rebel army's tactic beforehand. Also in order to avoid chaos from the foreign countries and the people, refrain from saying a word of this to other people."

'I see', Lux comprehended inside his heart.

It was unclear whether these people had grasped as far until the matter of 'Black Hero', but Lux understood several things.

Putting aside the intention of the four great nobles, the consuls of the new kingdom were putting their utmost trust in Lux's strength, on top of that□□they wished to make the annihilation of the Abysses as the achievement of the new kingdom's army, that was their thinking.

Lux was selected to take the decoy role for that reason.

Arcadia Empire lost the majority of their Drag-Knight's war potential from the coup d'etat five years ago and their military strength was greatly weakened.

The new kingdom was hastening the nurture of the Drag-Knight, but as expected, looking at the whole, it was the fact that there was a large gap opened between the new kingdom's force and the surrounding large countries.

There, they wanted to use this chance where many important people from various neighboring countries were gathering to demonstrate the new kingdom's strength to the people and all other countries.

However, skilled Drag-Knight whou could carry out the decoy role was few in number in the new kingdom, and no one wanted to lose their own superior pawn.

They were trying to use Lux was most likely because of such reason.

"If you cooperate with us, the matter of the other day□□the unauthorized Ruin investigation by the arbitrary judgment of the headmaster of the royal officer academy you are attending, Relie Aingram, as well as the indiscretion of all of you Syvalles who was going along with it in order to save her. We won't question those any further. I think that this is not a bad deal, but what do you think?"

"That's reckless Lord Dist! My brother's wound is still not fully healed for battle. Carrying out that mission by himself is□□"

Airi raised her objection against Dist's offer.

But,

"□□I understand. I'll do it."

Lux calmed his breathing in only a moment and clearly answered like that.

"Nii-san!?"

"It's fine Airi."

Lux smiled gently in order to calm the worried Airi.

"In the end, this is something that someone has to do. Even the current me will manage somehow, surely."

"....."

Airi faltered to say further from working her thought to think of various things. Then more voice came from the parliamentary seat.

"Looks like the talk is finished. Then, I'll speak another demand from us."

"Eh.....?"

The words of one of the four great nobles Zagha that suddenly came caused Airi to knit her eyebrows. The aged man then grinned smugly and raised four of his fingers.

"Four win□□. In order to obtain enough Ruin investigation right, we want you to get at least four win. Of course, carrying out the aforementioned decoy role is your top priority still."

".....What could you mean by that?"

When Airi made a dubious face, Zagha's narrow eyes narrowed further and he chuckled with a stifled voice.

At the All-Dragon Battle, it would be a round-robin event against each country. This time a total of six battles would be carried out.

In the recent years, the military cadet of each country had grown in strength quite much. Obtaining four victories there was next to impossible.

Nothing could be done about it with just Lux's strength alone but□□.

"It means exactly like how the words sound. It will take some effort to not question the incident we mentioned just now. There is also no way we can just not question the incident of using the Ruin investigation right without authorization itself. Don't worry, I heard that all of you the selection members of Syvalles are a gathering of powerful people. It will be easy to raise four win in the All-Dragon Battle I'm sure. If needs be, you the Weakest Undeclared can just fight hard for the sake of victory."

"That's, no matter what it's too high-handed□□.....-!?"

Airi moaned and she prepared to protest further, but her mouth closed against the cold gaze from the consuls that were looking down from the surrounding seat.

The demand of firm promise for obtaining four win in the All-Dragon Battles following the matter of the decoy role.

Lux who had seen the way the old empire did thing in the past could easily read their intention of intentionally forcing difficult tasks to him.

They were preparing a difficult problem that was hard to accomplish in addition of the decoy role matter was so that in the case he was unable to accomplish one of the tasks, they intended to force another troublesome request to him again someday in the future.

They would use this chance to ascertain whether Lux was an existence that was easy to control for the new kingdom or not, and whether he was a beneficial personnel or not. If possible they would

want to put a collar on him.

Not a shred of guilt could be seen from such people was because Lux and Airi were criminal from the old empire.

(Aa, this again.....)

It was pointless no matter what they said, they who were an existence with weak position.

People like them who held authority would be endlessly self-assured against such weak existence.

Just like the old empire that once imposed tyrannical rule to the people and brought the tide of male chauvinism in the past□□.

(Eh? Just now, what did I.....?)

Lux asked himself in his mind because of the strange déjà vu.

It was strange. Even though here wasn't the old empire anymore.....why?

But if that was the case□□if it was the same like in the past, then it was easy to understand.

If it was the current him, he had even more way to do thing than in the past.

"Understood. Regarding the decoy role for the Abyss extermination and the four win from the All-Dragon Battle. I will undertake both of them."

"Oo!"

At that moment, cheers and small applause welled up from the stair-shaped parliamentary seat.

Airi looked like she wanted to say something, but after a few moments she hung her head down in resignation.

Part 10

"It became later than we thought isn't it? It's lucky that the rain isn't strong though□□"

A light rain was gently falling on the capital's townscape.

Countless orange colored lamp colored the scenery brilliantly. Lux and Airi were watching that wondrously beautiful sight while going back to the inn.

After that, there was the briefing session about the detail of the mission where Lux would serve as decoy. He was talking with the military officers about the procedure, terrain information, how to deal with unexpected situation, and so on.

Among those he was a bit concerned about the information which said that Heiburg's Ruin was gone from sight, but it was something that wasn't really related with the operation this time, so even when asked for more detail about it there wasn't any more information.

It would worry him if he made Airi went home alone at night, so he made her waited for long, but when it came to that Airi□□.

"Haa....."

Like that, since some time ago she only kept sighing with a depressed expression.

"How about wearing this if it's cold? I also brought a coat just in case though□□"

"That's not it! I'm not cold anywhere! I'm worrying about Nii-san here you know!?"

Airi said that with a loud voice that was unusual for her. But after that she suddenly returned to her senses and shut her mouth.

Perhaps she was embarrassed about her loud voice, her cheeks were slightly reddening. She averted her gaze and resumed walking.

"Thank you for worrying about me. But, I'm fine. If it's about me□□"

"At that time, why didn't Nii-san say that you cannot use Bahamut....."

Airi showed her back toward Lux who stopped his feet and asked that while walking ahead.

".....I understand. If they don't know about the matter of the Black Hero, then we cannot disclose it intentionally. But, if it's Nii-san then you know aren't you? The meaning, of what I'm saying□□"

And then, Airi stood still and turned around to stare at Lux.

Due to the recoil of using Over Limit, Lux experienced extreme fatigue and burden.

He was recovered until a state where he could use Drag-Ride once more was only a few days ago.

In Airi's calculation, he could only use Bahamut for twelve minutes during the period of All-Dragon Battle.

If Lux used Wyvern, he could use it continuously to a certain degree, but even so it was unclear whether he could serve as a decoy against a large army of Abysses by himself.

"The meaning is different you know? Having only a Wyvern to lure the enemy while continuously escaping, and having Bahamut in reserve so that if I feel like it I can use it to escape while defeating Abyss are two different things□□"

No matter even if he had the Scale Blade that Lisha developed, it was impossible to continuously execute the counter technique Critical Hit when he was surrounded by a large number.

Also, because the situation would greatly vary depending on the number and variety of the Abyss, he would have to deal with many kind of diverse offense. Dealing with that would surely fray his nerves.

Most of the consuls were taking an optimistic view because they heard that Lux had taken part in Ragnarok extermination, but the matter wasn't that simple.

"Besides, there is the promise that we will obtain four win in the All-Dragon Battle too□□the fact is that Nii-san who will carry out the decoy role will become unable to go out in the second half of the match where your appearance is scheduled, and yet forcing that kind of demand is....."

Airi whispered with a grieving expression. Lux floated an apologetic smile toward such Airi.

"Even so, as I thought, I think that it's something that I should do."

In the end, it was like that.

The consuls forced a difficult problem on him, but their strategy and decision themselves weren't mistaken.

Using decoy would end it with the minimum death and wounded from the military and made it easier to annihilate the Abysses.

And then, if Lux rejected it, then someone else would have to do it in his place.

Rather than having Lisha or Celis, or perhaps Philuffy to become the candidate for such role, doing it himself let him felt more at ease.

Lux and Airi walked side by side. From the main road they entered into a narrow street where there wasn't any sign of people.

Because of the night's darkness and the rain, the light and temperature at the surrounding suddenly felt like they were dropping drastically.

".....Haa, in the end it turned out like this. If I at least can come along, I will be able to protect Nii-san a little, that was what I thought when coming here but□□"

Airi whispered in melancholy.

However, Lux's body moved reflexively faster than he could reply at her words.

"□□Watch out-!"

"Kyah.....!?"

Lux quickly pushed down Airi who was walking in front of him down on the street's stone paving.

Lux covered the back of Airi's head with his hand so it wouldn't hit the ground but,

"Wha, what are you doing all of sudden!?"

Right after Airi who was pushed down as though being embraced yelled that, the sound of a violent cutting wind was passing through in high speed right above Lux and Airi who were ducking down.

Airi who saw that became speechless and her body froze.

The raining royal capital at night with no presence of people.

A dragon of atypical shape was floating at the air above that street.

"My ba-ad, getting in the way of your fun date like this."

"You are....., from the afternoon□□"

The dull colored hair with a part of the bangs standing on end, and dangerous sanpaku eyes.

A selection member of Wanheim Principality, and one of the candidates for the Seven Dragon Paladin, Greifer.

His tone and attitude was lackadaisical like usual, but his presence was clearly different from before. He was emitting a definite hostility toward Lux and Airi.

"□□What is your intention?"

"That's my line y'know? Don't play dumb and handover the culprit already. If you do that then I too won't need to attack you."

Greifer was saying strange thing in response to Lux's question.

"What are you talking about!? We didn't do any□□"

".....Just now one of our selection member, he was attacked nearby the inn where we are staying by your country's guard□□a Drag Knight."

"Eh.....!?"

Lux and Airi raised a bewildered voice hearing Greifer's words.

"I also saw the new kingdom's crest so it ain't a mistake yeah? It was a Drake-type and he escaped right away, but without a doubt our student was assaulted in a surprise attack."

One Drag-Knight who was serving as guard of the new kingdom was ambushing the representative student of other country.

Such thing should be impossible.

But, looking at the Greifer in front of them who was looking dangerous, it didn't look like he was lying at all.

"The attack was using Breath Gun from long range, so fortunately it wasn't fatal yeah. But both his legs were broken, it was hopeless that he'd make it for the match tomorrow. I'm gonna have you settle the bill for that. Any objection?"

"-.....!? Putting aside whether your story is the truth or not, why are you aiming at us!?"

When Airi objected, Greifer snorted scornfully and showed a wicked look.

"Don't play dumb this late. Fundamentally any representative of other country don't know anything like where are we staying y'know? Except you new kingdom bunches who assigned the inn for us to stay."

".....Kuh."

'This is bad', thinking that, Lux resolved himself in his heart.

The truth of the incident was completely shrouded in mystery, but the point Greifer mentioned was indeed correct. It was obvious that Greifer had no intention of backing away. Then,

"□□Come, the symbol of power the winged dragon of crest. Obey my sword and take flight, Wyvern!"

Lux quickly pulled out his Sword Device from its sheath and summoned Wyvern in front of him.

He immediately wore that armor. Right after that, Greifer laughed.

"I'll introduce it before killing you. The name of the Divine Drag-Ride I got is <Cuelebre>. Here I go ruined prince□□Weakest Undefeated-sama!"

"Both of you, please wait! Doing this here is□□"

The moment Airi yelled, the two Drag-Rides moved at the same time.

Lux's Wyvern slashed up while flying and Cuelebre descended rapidly while its Blade stabbed downward. The two weapons collided and sharp sound of blade clashing and sparks scattered.

"Airi! Return to our inn and tell Relie-san about this matter, confirm about the mentioned guard! I'll stop him here alone."

"Nii-san-!?"

Airi yelled seeing Lux raising his voice with unusual tension in it.

"□□I'm relying on you. Be careful."

After telling her that, Lux lightly glided and fixed his posture midair.

Right after the momentary clash, the shoulder armor of Lux's Wyvern was shallowly gouged.

(This is, bad□□)

Even if the fact that Lux wasn't in full health was taken away, this man called Greifer was considerably skilled.

There were two reasons why Lux didn't request Airi to ask for help from Divine Drag-Knight user like Lisha and others.

One, in order to prevent this incident from turning big.

And then the other reason was because he understood that this was an opponent that might harm even Lisha and co.

In that case there was no way Lux could call for help from them here.

"You've got it in you huh, former prince-sama. Defending against my sword with a mere general purpose Drag-Ride, not just that, you even shift the trajectory of my rush so that your little sis won't get dragged into this. But"

Greifer readied his large Blade□□a weirdly shaped blade with the length of its blade reaching around two mel. Then he circulated the energy from his Force Core through it.

"If you think that this is me being serious, then that will concern my honor yeah."

The air was thick with tension that felt like it was electrifying the skin.

The moment the tension heightened until the limit, Cuelebre moved.

Cuelebre was clad in violent gale that was visible with naked eye and charged forward like a bullet.

At the same time a slash that was several level faster than before drew an arc and assaulted the Wyvern, it was then□□that long blade shined faintly and its length extended several times over.

"Wha-.....!?"

The weapon transformed in the middle of slashing.

It was most likely□□Cuelebre's special armament.

The Scale Blade couldn't make it in time to block the attack from the midway transformation that suddenly occurred.

Greifer's Blade was falling toward the Wyvern's shoulder by grazing the Blade Lux was holding, it was then□□,

"Nn?"

PAAN! A whirling air burst in front of their eyes and both of them were sent flying backward.

Right after their blades clashed at the beginning, Lux amassed energy in advance to use Howling Howl for holding back the opponent. He immediately released it just now and barely blocked a direct hit on his self.

But, Greifer who fixed his balance in only a single instant didn't pause and pursued after Lux who was attempting to escape to the opposite direction using the momentum of Howling Howl.

The townscape of the royal capital consisted of countless high and low buildings packed close to each other.

One wrong step and they would crash. In such situation, the two skillfully weaved through the buildings and flew in high speed.

"So you dodged my <Tail Blade(Dragon Tail Connecting Blade)> at first sight. Looks like it ain't that much of an exaggeration that they called your defense unrivaled huh."

Greifer smiled fearlessly while driving his Cuelebre and unleashed an attack toward Lux who was intently retreating to take some distance.

"Kuh.....!?"

Lux was called as the Weakest Undefeated because he carried out many mock battle in the capital by devoting himself to defense, but the attack of this young man called Greifer was terribly hard to see through.

The sharp slash of the Tail Blade that could transform its range and trajectory midway, and Greifer's timing in throwing Dagger the moment Lux reacted to it was superb. It couldn't be dealt with by ordinary means.

Lux was also holding back the opponent using Howling Howl and Breath Gun, but just a bit of attack didn't even budge Cuelebre that possessed solid armor and barrier.

Therefore Lux couldn't exchange attack with the opponent equally and he was forced to a one-sided defensive battle.

In a glance, Greifer's offensive was just a simple brute force but there was no pause between his attacks.

If there was a building at Lux's right side, Greifer would deal out a slash from the left. He limited the escape path, and on top of that he also threw a Dagger as extra attack.

If Lux dodged just barely, Greifer would use Breath Gun and Cannon in conjunction and stopped him in his track.

It was attacking in waves like a storm.

It was like how a skilled hunter would cut the escape paths of his prey one by one, controlling the prey's movement while chasing after it, cornering the prey with certainty.

At first Lux could perfectly dodge Greifer's attack, but the number and power of the attacks were gradually increasing. The barrier of the Wyvern was gradually pierced and the surface of its armor was starting to get scratched.

"You're using a rare Blade there but it'd be better for your health if you aren't stingy y'know? In two or three more attacks, I'm gonna chop you up."

Greifer's Blade struck down vertically along with that declaration.

But when Lux was blown away backward, Greifer noticed something odd and stopped moving.

".....Hm? This place, where in□□?"

There were few lighting around and the air was quiet like a lake surface.

It was the new block of the royal capital□□the redeveloped district.

It was a place where there would be a lot of construction worker, but at night it was mostly an empty lot.

Lux was estranged with the terrain of the capital these days, but he executed his plan by relying on his memory of the capital's map that he saw when he was summoned just now.

"□□I see, so you made a show like you are getting cornered while it's actually you who are luring me in? Into this place where it's okay even if we rampage a bit."

Greifer who grasped Lux's plan grinned and readied his sword.

"Man, that's terrifying yeah. A guy who can match me this far by using general purpose Drag-Ride ain't that many even at Wanheim Principality. That's why it's a pity□□that I'm gonna have to crush you here."

Suddenly Greifer's atmosphere changed with his tone and expression looked arrogant.

He used his empty left hand to pull out his Sword Device, held it as though he was sending thought to it, and then he returned it into the sheath once more.

It was a Drag-Ride control motion to sharpen one's nerve for the mind control operation.

(No good□□don't tell me, he is planning to use Divine Raiment!?)

Greifer sent a piercing eye glint toward Lux's Wyvern, and then he held aloft his Tail Blade really high that the sword blade couldn't be seen from the front.

"It's too late even if you notice it this late y'know, Weakest Undefeated!"

Lux who felt the alarming sign jumped back. At that moment, Greifer threw three Daggers and cut the escape path to the back while he charged forward.

"Kuh.....!"

Greifer had anticipated that Lux would take distance by moving backward, and on top of that he accelerated extremely by predicting that escape trajectory.

Normally, Lux's style was to see through the preliminary movement of the enemy's attack and, but now his action to move at a spacious place where he had breathing room in order to neutralize the opponent's initial speed and power was aimed at by Greifer.

In other words, this man called Greifer had predicted Lux's defensive action.

An opening would be created if he deflected the Dagger using his Blade.

Therefore, the moment he deflected the Dagger using Howling Howl, Greifer circled to right beside Lux.

"□□This is my win yeah? Prince-sama]"

He swung the quickly transforming multi-joint blade, aiming at Lux's torso.

But at that moment, Lux who should be taken by surprise met the tip of that blade precisely with the tip of his Scale Blade.

Lux's movement that looked like his escape was cut off was a bluff to entice Greifer into a narrow place.

Lux deliberately got cornered into a place that was surrounded by building to limit the angle of attack of his opponent so he could aim for a counter using Critical Hit.

The perfect timing.

The tip of the Tail Blade that extended out in order to aim for Lux, just when Lux thought he would be able to destroy it completely,

"□□ < Photon Dive > "

".....!?"

The moment both weapons crossed, Cuelebre's whole body was enveloped in blazing light.

Immediately after, the Scale Blade's barrier that Lux generated rebounded from the light and Lux was blown backward.

"U, ah.....!?"

Lux who was blown away while rolling on the ground crashed onto a huge clock tower.

He didn't receive lethal wound, but impact ran through the flying device on his Wyvern's back wings. Letters of light floated in front of his eyes, displaying the decreasing output.

(Damn it.....! I cannot avoid□□the next attack.)

Lux immediately laid out a barrage of Breath Gun, and he further threw Daggers to hold back the opponent.

But, both attacks were easily deflected by the light enveloping Cuelebre and lost their effect.

"This is□□, that Drag-Ride's Divine Raiment.....!?"

Deflecting the opponent's attack□□even the barrier of normal Drag-Ride could possibly achieve such feat, but normally if a Drag-Ride's barrier blocked an attack, it would result in some amount a backlash for the Drag-Ride.

But, that blazing light which was enveloping the armor didn't cause any backlash for the user.

"Correct answer. The ability of Cuelebre's Divine Raiment is 'invincibility'. In a state where I am enveloped by this light, all kind of attacks woulda get deflected, what's more I'm the only one who can attack one-sidedly. I'm teaching you that after all your effort□□that's the prize for fighting me until this far with just a mere general purpose Wyvern."

"Ku....."

Lux groaned. Right after that, the light enveloping Cuelebre vanished as thought it had burned out.

It seemed that invincibility could only be maintained for just around few seconds, but for the current Lux, he couldn't hold out even if the enemy didn't have that.

(Even though I cannot use Bahamut here□□)

"Killing you will make it troublesome later so I'm not gonna kill you, but I'll have you meet the same fate like my comrade whose legs were broken!"

Greifer lifted up his Tail Blade to aim at Lux who was buried under rubble, but then,

BASHII-! A Wire Tail(Dragon Tail Rope Wire) stretching from behind entangled that one hand and stopped it.

"□□That's as far as you go, Greifer!"

The true identity of the intruder became clear along with that refined soprano voice.

Behind Cuelebre there was the silhouette of an EX Wyvern before anyone noticed it.

The Drag-Knight clad in armor was the young man with androgynous face that was with Greifer before, Coral.

He wasn't wearing pilot suit but the uniform of his own school must be because he was hurriedly rushing to here.

"Please forgive his rudeness. Our leader ran by himself□□"

"Oi, why are you stopping me? And then what are you doing apologizing as you please huh, Coral? What I'm doing here is a justified revenge y'know?"

"Did you see him as the one actually doing it? If not then there is no proof at all. As long as the culprit isn't caught and interrogated, this is nothing but false accusation and violence from our side. You understand that don't you?"

Greifer showed a grave look. But Coral also didn't concede at all. He retorted back with a cool tone.

Based from his dignified attitude, it wasn't hard to imagine that this young man whose appearance looked like a girl was also hiding an equal strength with Greifer.

"Keh! I got it already honor student-sama. Aa-aa, that's why I hate you."

Greifer spat out as though he lost interest before he sheathed his sword and dispelled his armor.

Coral who saw that then approached the clock tower where Lux crashed onto.

"Are you all right? Any injury□□"

"No. I'm still fine, more or less."

Lux told so to Coral who was holding out his hand toward Lux worriedly. Lux then went down to the ground with his own strength.

Certainly he didn't have any serious injury or damage.

But, it was only him escaping such thing with a paper-thin difference, if Coral was late several second, he didn't know what would happen to him.

"By all right, this matter have to be reported and discussed with

the judge panel of the All-Dragon Battle and, but....."

Coral also went down and dispelled his armor. Then he muttered that with an awkward look.

By all rights, the selection members for the All-Dragon Battle from each country weren't permitted to battle each other outside the arena. In the case that rule was broken, the offender would be banned from participating□□or depending on the situation, the represented country would also be disqualified.

Because this time it was Greifer who initiated the fight, that rule should be applied to him, but Lux shook his head.

"No. It's fine if we treat this matter as never happened. I don't know about the detail, but it seemed that the new kingdom's guard attacked your member first..... I too don't want to make this into a big problem."

"It also cannot be like that. At the very least we have to check whether you are injured or not□□if you tell me where is the capital's hospital is located, I'll accompany you there."

"Oooi, honor student. Since when you became the new kingdom's aide huh?"

"You just shut up over there."

Coral scolded with red face when Greifer pointed out with casual tone.

Lux was thankful for Coral's consideration, but Lux too didn't intend to prolong this matter for more than this.

"I'm really all right. Rather than that, our side will also investigate about the matter in question, so for today□□"

".....I guess. It will be a big day for both of us tomorrow, we too has already reported to the other guard just now, so□□later."

When Lux said that, Coral bowed in thanks and walked away.

Even though he had come until this far outskirts, he didn't leave using Drag-Ride was to avoid even further commotion than this.

At the sky, several Drag-Knights from the military were already circling around because they heard the commotion.

"Then, I'm going home too. I got a bit of bone to pick with you and this country, but let's settle it next time. It's a waste to finish you with this kind of half-baked battle."

Greifer grinned while saying that before he left.

".....Fuu."

The time that was like a storm passed and Lux was finally liberated.

There was no curfew at the inn they were reserving, but he didn't want to worry everyone, so he hurriedly went back.

Lux dragged his body that was heavy from fatigue and somehow managed to return until the inn. There, Airi was standing in front of the door with a stole wrapped on her shoulders.

"Uwa....."

Those reproachful eyes staring at him caused Lux to raise his voice reflexively.

"Uwa.....", it's me who want to say that. What were you doing fighting like that? What a no good Nii-san as usual."

Airi immediately replied with an exasperated tone.

Most likely she explained the situation to Relie and asked her to dispatch the army's guard to reinforce Lux. After that she was waiting for Lux's return here.

"No but, I was pursued.....and I couldn't shake him off."

"Wouldn't it be fine if Nii-san ran away to a place with a lot of people or to a military facility?Well, though knowing Nii-san

you must have escaped to the direction of the redeveloped district where there is no people so that no one will get dragged into it."

"....."

Everything was seen through so Lux couldn't even say anything in his defense.

"Let's go inside quickly. You will catch cold if you stay wet like that."

Airi opened the door and urged Lux to come in. Lux obeyed her meekly and followed behind her.

Part 11

"Eh!? You knew the true identity of the culprit? The one who attacked the selection member of Wanheim Principality□□"

"Please lower your voice Nii-san. It will become complicated again if someone heard it by any chance."

Lux wiped his body that was wet from rain, drank a hot tea, and warmed his cold body.

After that, he entered the double room that he shared with Airi in order to sleep. But the first word he heard right after entering inside caused Lux to raise his voice unconsciously.

The incident not long ago that became the origin of the dispute.

A Drag Knight of the new kingdom attacked the inn of Wanheim Principality. Airi said that she knew the true identity of the attacker.

"I'll say this first, but it's forbidden to disclose it to other people okay? I too only heard about it from Relie-san just now."

"And, why did a guard of the new kingdom did something like□□"

"That's, unknown."

".....Eh?"

Lux was perplexed. In contrast Airi continued her talk with a serious expression.

"When he was using Drag-Ride to patrol the capital, suddenly the Drag-Ride became impossible to control and attacked the inn of Wanheim Principality that was nearby□□. That was the excuse of the officer in question."

"Drag-Ride's, rampage□□was that it?"

"That too is a strange story isn't it? A Drag-Ride's rampage□□it happens when the Drag-Ride surpass the ability of the user to control and do unintentional act. Of course, there are a lot of incidents where people or thing was harmed because of that. But□□"

"This time, a selection member of Wanheim Principality who is inside an inn was shot by Breath Gun, and then after that the guard immediately escaped from there....."

"Yes, that kind of skillful rampage method is impossible. Besides, it seems that officer is quite the veteran, and when his Drag-Ride was inspected there wasn't any abnormality."

A rampage that happened in an impossible timing and an assault that occurred because of that.

"The capital apprehended him and an interrogation is being carried out continuously. It's still not known how they will explain about it to Wanheim Principality."

"I see."

If a conclusion had to be spoken, that officer himself might be a spy from somewhere.

That possibility too certainly wasn't zero but□□could it be?

"By the way Nii-san, do you remember about that girl?"

".....Yes."

Airi quietly talked to Lux inside the bedroom that had its lighting turned off.

Lux too noticed it.

Yoruka's Divine Drag-Ride that he had already told to Airi too□□Yato no Kami.

The ability of Spell Code, the Divine Raimen that dominated and controlled other people's Drag-Ride.

If it was with her strength and skill□□certainly she could easily cause this kind of incident.

(But.....I don't understand. Is this, really Yoruka's work?)

The piled up fatigue was gradually robbing him of his ability to think.

And then, Lux fell asleep.

Chapter 3: The Girls' Reward

Part 1

The next day, the international tournament□□All-Dragon Battle's first day was finally held.

The place was the Drag-Ride arena nearby the castle.

The scale was even larger than the academy's practice ground. A great number of citizens and nobles were gathering there.

It was scheduled for three days. In order to limit the Drag-Knights' fatigue to the minimum, there would be one day of rest in between. The tournament was divided to the first half in the first day and the later half in the second day and it was carried out under special rule.

The tournament this time was a round robin event that was performed by the seven participating country.

Three battle in the first half, and three battle in the later half. A total of six battles would be carried out.

The competition rule against a country was a maximum of the three matches, the one who took the first two victory in two matches won the battle. It was fundamentally based on the rule of the capital's tournament.

There was two kind of matches, a one-on-one individual battle, and a two-on-two pair battle. The side that settled two wins first would win at that time.

In the case the result was one win and one loss, both camps would choose a member who still hadn't fought and the last individual battle would decide it.

It was only after all the members had performed once that the

team could choose once more between all their members.

Therefore the comprehensive strength of the team was stressed here. It was a system where it would be hard to be victorious by depending on the great effort of a single powerful member.

When the members of the new kingdom gathered inside the waiting room in the arena, the leader of Syvalles Celis stood in front of everyone.

"The three battles today will be against religious country Ymir, Turkimes Confederation, and Blackened Kingdom. About the first battle against Ymir, I believe we will carry it out without our four Divine Drag-Ride users as arranged."

"Aa, if I'm not mistaken this is what you called throwing a match right.....?"

Tillfur of Tria who heard that spoke sounding somewhat dejectedly.

"No. It's what you call a strategic bargaining. Or rather, please don't bring up again the matter that has been decided from previous discussion."

Noct immediately retorted and lightly clapped on Tillfur's back.

The new kingdom ide ended up borrowing Krulcifer who was a prominent Drag-Knight from their allied country Ymir.

Therefore, it was the moral principle for the new kingdom to not put Krulcifer in the first battle against Ymir, and they also couldn't show a stance of doing their all to win by investing their other Divine Drag-Ride user.

Because of such reason it was decided to enter the users of general purpose Drag-Ride only against religious country Ymir.

In this aspect, it was the instruction that came from the capital government's strategic bargaining rather than the selection members themselves, so there was also an implicit understanding part in it.

And then Tillfur was planned to enter the first match, the individual match of this battle.

"But of course, you don't mind if we actually won this battle right, captain-dono?"

When Sharis said that, Celis nodded with a serious look and,

"Of course. The member's placement is already decided, but that's all the restriction imposed on this battle. Please go and win, Tillfur."

".....Roger!"

Tillfur strongly nodded after a slight hesitation.

"If it's Tillfur then you will surely win."

When Lux called out from the side,

"Right, thanks. I'll do my best for instructor-sama's sake too okay~"

She laughed jestingly.

"Then, if there is no more question we will end this talk here. I won't mind if each of you watch the battle or take rest by your own decision, but I order all of you to grasp the schedule and return here when it's time. Understood?"

Everyone nodded at Celis's words.

At the end Relie who was at the room's corner stood in front of everyone and gave the concluding speech.

"Everyone□□you've worked hard the other day. And then, thank you. Today fight for the sake of this new kingdom and for the sake of none other but yourself, okay?"

"Yes!"

Everyone raised their voice before breaking up.

And then thirty minutes later, the All-Dragon Battle finally began.

Part 2

OOOOOOOOOOOoooo!

The moment Lux exited the waiting room into the venue, cheers that shook the earth overwhelmed Lux.

Perhaps it should be said as expected from the All-Dragon Battle, even Lux who had participated in the mock battle here several times had never seen the place this bustling.

"It's finally starting huh□□, our battle that is."

When Lux sat down on the spectator seat for the participants, Krulcifer quietly took the seat beside him.

Krulcifer's turn would be at the third battle, so she still had leeway for time.

Everyone else was spending their time tuning their Drag-Ride until the very last minute or heightening their focus for the match, but for Lux he wasn't arranged to appear today.

Because he was still recovering, it was better to not force himself to participate. Or rather, that was the cover reason that Airi told to everyone, but in actuality it wasn't the true reason.

From late at night tomorrow until the dawn□□, he would do his best to accomplish his decoy role that was ordered to him from the government in order to obstruct the imperial capital recapture plan. That was the true reason.

It was kept secret from other selection members so to not make them worry, but Krulcifer had sharp instinct and mind, so Lux was anxious whether he was seen through by her.

"Somehow, it feels difficult to fight against our allied country Ymir isn't it?"

"I wonder? I'm all right though. Because I've come to a clean decision about it."

When Lux spoke while watching the battle, Krulcifer responded with a cool smile.

‘As expected’, Lux thought while smiling wryly inside his heart.

"It looks like a candidate of Seven Dragon Paladin from Ymir also participate. Though I don't know the detail as someone studying abroad in the new kingdom."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. I heard about it from my family's butler, Alterize. This candidate is a powerful person that is the best by far even among the officer cadets, and that she is number one even through the successive generations."

".....It's that girl, isn't it?"

Lux sent his gaze at the arena's ring and asked.

It was a girl with platinum hair and small stature that could be mistaken as a child.

"Mel Gizalut. She is the top student at the faith military academy, a Drag-Knight who is crowned with the nickname of Subjugator."

The girl Krulcifer talked about was maintaining a composed smile from start to end while cornering the new kingdom's selection member with skillful tactic.

The Drag-Ride she was using was EX Wyvern, but looking from her skill, it was certain that she also had the strength to skillfully use Divine Drag-Ride.

"It seemed that there was a bit of dissent between her house and my Einfeld house regarding Ruin. Well, it's something that is not really related to me who is shunned from my house though."

"Such thing□□"

Hearing that self-depreciation that was rare for Krulcifer made Lux spontaneously spoke.

"But, even if someday a chance to fight with her come, I don't have any intention to lose."

"....."

"Becoming a first class Drag-Ride. Continuing to be strong□□even if I'm alone. Those are targets that I imposed on myself, because they are necessary for me to live."

Krulcifer, the girl who was discovered inside the Ruin of religious country Ymir.

Because she had such past, she felt sense of alienation toward her family and other people even after she was adopted by Einfeld house, therefore, she was looking for accomplishment in order to be recognized by her family.

"I don't plan to be like before anymore. And I have trained just for that."

The before that she meant was about the battle at the Ark.

She must be talking about one of the Ragnarok, Yggdrasil.

"About that, it couldn't be helped. Even I only managed just barely that time. That victory came because there were various coincidences and luck."

"Perhaps that is so."

Krulcifer agreed with Lux's words once, before she suddenly smiled.

"But, it's vexing. It doesn't matter even if the opponent was a Ragnarok that human couldn't match, I cannot be satisfied with that result. Lux-kun, you see, even though I look like this I'm really a sore loser you know?"

"Is, is that so?"

Krulcifer slowly brought her face closer with a mischievous smile. Lux's heart unconsciously jumped.

"More accurately speaking, I have several things that I absolutely don't want to concede, and I really hate to lose in regard to them. That's why, I have a request for you. At the country founding anniversary tomorrow, can you spend a bit of time with me?"

"Eh□□?"

Lux raised a surprised voice because the talk was suddenly brought to a different direction.

"That's my special request from your reward to me. Will you accept?"

"Tha, that's, could it be□□"

The request of Krulcifer to spend time together at tomorrow's country founding anniversary.

So to speak wasn't this that thing called date?

Thinking so, caused Lux's heart to beat fast inside his chest.

"Tha, that..... It seems that our butler Alterize also come here as one of the delegation leaders of Ymir. I want to show to her that it looks like our relationship is going well."

"Ah, is, is that so. Then, perhaps it's that thing again□□that 'lover case'?"

"Ye, yes, that's right."

Krulcifer nodded while showing a somewhat embarrassed expression.

Once, in order to avoid the political marriage that her family the Einfeld house forced on her, she made a request of acting 'Krulcifer's lover role' to him.

The eldest son of one of the four great nobles Balzeride lost his standing, and that case was safely washed away but□□,

".....But, in the end what happened with that? Alterize-san

misunderstood us as real lover, and she said that she will endorse me as Krulcifer-san's fiancée but□□"

"About that□□it's really not a problem. It's going well, so it's all right if Lux-kun doesn't worry about it."

"Is, is that so....."

Lux felt some kind of implication from Krulcifer's tone, but perhaps it was just his imagination.

"And so, in order to make her believe that even now our relationship is continuing, that.....it will help if you can act as though it's a date between lovers."

".....Right, I understand. I'm a bit nervous, but if it's with Krulcifer-san I feel that it will be fun."

"Is, is that so.....? If you say that, then it's also worth it for me to rely on you."

Krulcifer averted her gaze and for some reason her cheeks were blushing.

The air felt embarrassing somehow, but when it flowed between the two□□,

OOOOOOOOOOOH!

A conspicuously loud cheers rose from the surrounding audience seats.

"The third one-on-one matches is Ymir's victory. With two win and one loss, the first battle of block A goes to religious country Ymir's victory!"

A Drag-Ride commentator raised his voice using Drake's function to magnify the voice.

It went mostly as expected, but all the same the defeat felt regrettable.

"Unfortunately, it looks like we lose."

"Yes. How about we return for now before the next match begin?"

Lux and Krulcifer stood up from the venue's audience seating where the enthusiasm was still continuing.

Their expression had returned back into seriousness.

Although their first battle ended in defeat, the second battle against Turkimes Confederation ended up safely in victory thanks to Celis and Philuffy's great contribution.

And then, continuing to the third battle. Against Blackened Kingdom, Krulcifer won the first match, then the pair of Lisha and Noct at the second match also progressed through their match dominantly, but midway a bit of accident occurred.

The special armament of Divine Drag-Ride Tiamat that Lisha controlled, Legion. One of it misaimed and flew toward the audience seat.

In front of each spectator stand there was Drag-Ride stationed for defense. They deployed wide range barrier, so there was no particular damage, even so it was judged to be a dangerous act and Lisha received a warning.

After that the new kingdom's side advanced the match dominantly without any particular problem and settled it.

'Because both the pair member of Blackened Kingdom are unable to continue fighting, it's the victory of the new kingdom's pair! Because they have obtained two win, the third matches become the new kingdom's win!'

The spectator stand at the new kingdom's side was greatly excited from the second victory of today.

Lux hurriedly went to the stone passage that connected toward the waiting room to welcome the pair.

"Thank you for your hard work, Lisha-sama."

When Lux called like that to the two who had already dispelled their armor and walked toward him, Lisha responded "Ye, yeah....." with her expression looking bewildered.

"What's the matter?"

"That, I think you also noticed but, in the middle of the match□□my Drag-Ride's control temporarily stopped working. I wondered what was it but....."

"Yes. I judged that surely Lisha-sama did that purposefully."

"Are you stupid!? Even for luring the enemy, there is no way I'm going to do something like sending my Legion flying toward the audience seat even purposefully isn't it!? Even I am□□, more or less the princess of this country after all."

"Is that so....."

Lux who heard Lisha's words whispered seriously.

Certainly he thought that it was an unnatural action, but it seemed that even Lisha herself didn't understand the cause.

Tiamat was a Divine Drag-Ride, losing control because of the degree of difficulty piloting it and the intensity of exhaustion□□the danger of 'rampage' existed from the beginning.

But, recently Lisha's control skill, physical ability, and her mental strength were increasing. Because of that something like rampage indication couldn't be seen at all from her.

(Something, bothers me.....)

"We, well, it doesn't matter. Rather than that, I have something I want to talk with you for a bit.....is it okay?"

Lisha looked up at Lux's face looking somewhat discomposed.

"Aa.....! Come to think of it, me too. Then, after returning once to the waiting room, let's□□"

"We, well then, after I change clothes.....I'll be waiting."

Lisha said only that before leaving with a jog.

The first day of All-Dragon Battle came to an end without a hitch like this.

Part 3

"It has been very long since I last entered the capital's atelier."

After the simple meeting in the waiting room where they looked back at today's battle was over.

Before returning back to the inn that was the base of the selection members, Lisha called Lux to the Drag-Ride atelier that was inside the castle's ground.

Lux had visited that place many times at the old empire period. A great number of Drag-Ride were lining up there, with characteristic metallic smell drifting in the air.

Inside the atelier where one could somehow felt its history, Lisha and Lux were sitting in front of a pedestal while slowly drinking tea.

"I see. However, it's great that this place is reserved for us during the All-Dragon Battle, but as I thought a new place feels unfamiliar. When things like the tools or the positioning of the work table are different, it will bother you no matter what."

Lisha grumbled while sipping the herb tea that was prepared by a maid.

Lisha was wearing a white robe similar like when she was at the academy's atelier. It seemed that she was completely feeling like a developer.

Lux was relieved that she wasn't bothered anymore by the rampage that occurred at the previous match while he smiled wryly.

"But, for Lisha-sama to call me here, have you created some kind of weapon or Drag-Ride again?"

"No, after all as expected these few days there is no time at all. Checking the Drag-Ride that I'm using, then□□. That, there are various things like training and so on, like the speech for your introduction....."

"Eh.....?"

The last part was said with low voice, so Lux couldn't hear it. When he tilted his head in puzzlement,

"I, it's nothing!Right! Open your schedule for tomorrow night no matter what okay!? I called you here to say that!"

"Tomorrow night.....is it?"

"Ye, yeah..... That's, if possible, I'll be happy if you can also go around with me at the country founding anniversary but□□"

"Ah, I'm sorry. For that it's a bit.....I still don't know my schedule."

"Mugugu..... It must be that Krulcifer again anyway. Good grief."

Instantly Lisha guessed something and she muttered with a pout.

She pondered looking troubled for a while, but she immediately pulled herself together and turned toward Lux.

"Well fine. Those bunches has the special request right so it can't be helped. But, come properly to where I am before the anniversary is over okay?"

"Ah, yes. I'll go without fail, Lisha-sama."

After Lux nodded, Lisha also crossed her arms in satisfaction and puffed up her chest that was quite large for her small build.

".....And, just what kind of business you have with me?"

"Err, that□□it'll be great if this is possible....."

Lux brought his mouth closer to Lisha's ear and whispered 'a certain thing' that he thought up last night.

When he finished talking, Lisha looked at Lux with a dubious face.

".....What's with that? What's the meaning of purposefully doing something like that?"

"I don't know. I cannot guarantee that it will surely be helpful, but□□by some chance, it could be the key for the battle this time. Please, can you do it?"

Lux told that toward the bewildered Lisha with a serious expression.

"□□Its performance being the same like usual is okay right?"

Lisha closed her eyes and groaned for a while, before at the end she said that.

"It can be done!?"

"I don't know how far I can do it, but I'll manage somehow. After all that kind of playing around that isn't related with actual function is totally my specialty. But, the customizing that you ask, it will be a gamble whether it will look like it or not□□"

"Thank you very much, Lisha-sama!"

When Lux grasped Lisha's hand in gratitude, Lisha went "Wa....." and showed an expression that was a mix of bewilderment and embarrassment.

But, after keeping that posture for a few seconds, Lisha's cheeks were turning faintly red and she glared at Lux with an upward gaze.

".....Well, I certainly accepted that request. But, putting that aside□□how should I say it, you, recently are you mistaking me as a handyman or a toolbox?"

"Eh.....?"

For a moment Lux tilted his head in incomprehension of the words' meaning. Lisha continued speaking further.

"No, it's not that I'm particularly dissatisfied with your request just now.But, like, sometimes I wish that you will ask me for something different. Specifically things like, you want to go to a date with me, of you want me to make you lunch, if you are asking me something in that direction.....so far, I'm also learning cooking bit by bit, and yet"

Lisha was whispering such thing with a low voice while fidgeting and entangling her fingers in embarrassment, but,

"A, as I thought it's nothing! Forget what I said just now!"

Midway she yelled somewhat panicky and in the end she left it vaguely.

"Yosh! I'll do the matter you ask without fail so leave it to me! By the way, today there was a dummy arm for Drag-Ride sold at the capital's commerce and industry district, this is a rare chance, so I'll remodel your Wyvern with six arms□□"

"Please don't! My request just now will be meaningless like that!"

"I see□□then, what if two from that six are turned into drill?"

"What kind of standard you are using to compromise!? I'm begging you, just do like what I said before□□"

"I get it. I'll back down this time for your sake."

Her cheeks puffed up in dissatisfaction, and yet she immediately took out the diagram that recorded the Drag-Ride's parts and began staring it while putting on a monocle.

"Then, I'll start working on it after this, so you just go do your own work. I'll do my best properly too."

"□□Yes. I'm looking forward to tomorrow night, Lisha-sama."

Lux answered firmly to that alone and he left the Drag-Ride's atelier.

In the end, he still didn't tell anyone about the imperial capital recapture plan even to Lisha.

In any case Lux's resolve to play the decoy role by himself didn't change, and right now he wanted to concentrate to All-Dragon Battle.

(There is no doubt regarding that. But□□)

But, inside Lux there was something bothering him.

The case with Greifer that occurred yesterday, and Tiamat's rampage that occurred today.

It was only a fragment of faint out of place feeling that was too much to be called suspicion.

As the result of taking those into consideration, he thought to ask Lisha to do something for him.

"Next□□there's only one left, huh."

He was only concerned of the movement of Hayes who escaped at the previous fight, but at this point of time he wouldn't understand anything even if he thought about it.

Right now he had to do what he ought to do.

First, he had to hear about the special reward request from Philuffy and Celis.

"Well, as expected I don't think that I'll receive more invitation for date though....."

Lux muttered to himself while going outside, and he hurried on through the evening capital's street.

Part 4

And then the next morning.

The country founding anniversary of the new kingdom finally began.

At the All-Dragon Battle's schedule, today was the second day that was for a resting day. The participants were basically free whether to rest or to look around the festival.

Lux received a request from Krulcifer to 'go around the festival together' as the reward for finishing her assignment at the training camp.

Krulcifer was already waiting when he headed to the entrance of the inn where they were staying.

Krulcifer wasn't wearing her usual cool smile, but she looked slightly awkward with a complicated smile.

In the middle of All-Dragon Battle, there was a rule that the participating selection members had to wear their uniform when going outside, so the two of them also wore their uniform, but Lux's concern didn't lie there.

"This, I'm sorry Krulcifer-san. I never thought, that it would become like this□□"

"I'm not planning to blame you. I'm only exasperated with my own carelessness. In a sense, it should be easy enough to predict that this day will turn like this."

When Lux apologized, Krulcifer responded curtly.

Actually yesterday, when he left Lisha's atelier and headed toward the practice ground inside the castle's site, he received an outrageous request from Celis who was there.

'Lu, Lux. I have a special request for you. It's□□I want you to accompany me at the anniversary tomorrow!'

Honestly, it was troubling.

He already had previous engagement with Krulcifer in that day, the request from the three who finished the assignment wasn't ranked differently against each other, and it also wasn't first come first served.

For the time being, he talked with Celis that he received the same request from Krulcifer.

'Ho, how could this be!? I, I understand. In that case I'll accept half the time so please. Normally I'll be patient but.....at the moment it's, there is an important talk I need to have with you so□□I cannot concede here!'

She strongly insisted, so in the end Lux agreed with the condition that he would consult Krulcifer too of what to do.

After he returned to the inn that was their base, he immediately headed toward Philuffy's room and he unexpectedly encountered her inside her room dressed in negligee.

Lux's heart was throbbing hard toward that stimulating figure while he asked Philuffy about the special request that she would want to make. He also talked about the request he received from Krulcifer and Celis, and then□□,

'Then, tomorrow, go on a date with me too.'

'Eh.....!?'

Yes, Lux was completely shocked from hearing Philuffy speaking with her usual absentminded and serious face was because of the very shocking request.

No, of course there was a possibility that Philuffy too would say 'I want to look around the festival together' to him, but for Philuffy who gave childish impression to say such thing was something that Lux had never even imagined.

'Eh, ah, right..... That's□□fine though.'

Lux was shook up by Philuffy who said that straightforwardly with her serious face and carefree tone stayed unchanging. His

cheeks reddened while he consented.

Since the past the two of them had played together many times, but this was the first time she called it a 'date', so he somehow felt embarrassed.

'Then it's a promise, okay.'

In the end after that, Lux wracked his brain to make the schedule with Krulcifer and Celis got by somehow and he wasn't able to really sleep.

With such complicated sequence of events happening, all of them consulted each other once, and the result was that he would walk around together with Krulcifer from the morning until the lunch.

"Well, putting that aside, let's depart soon. If I'm not mistaken, Alterize said that she will return to Ymir's inn at afternoon after all."

"Right. Please take care of me, Krulcifer-san."

Lux who returned to his senses from those words pulled himself together and responded.

If he kept worrying without end, it would be inexcusable to Krulcifer who had shown her understanding of Lux's position.

Thinking that, they started walking toward the capital's street.

And then, the second date with Krulcifer began.

Part 5

A large mansion located in the capital□□Moon Lamp Mansion. It was the first time Lux entered inside it.

That facility which was mainly used for the party of nobles was divided into three floors. It had a bar that also offered meal, and a lounge with chic atmosphere.

Its main attraction was the dance hall that was decorated with gorgeous furniture and chandelier with beautiful craftsmanship.

People could also borrow outfit there although it would take some money. It was a famous social meeting place that anyone would show their face at least once there if they were a noble at the capital.

Especially at this period when the country founding anniversary was on going, the venue was really crowded and enveloped in hustle and bustle since the daytime.

After lightly viewing the bar and the lounge, both Lux and Krulcifer rented outfit for themselves and changed into it.

When Lux who changed into a white ceremonial clothes was waiting at the dance hall, the door of the changing room opened and Krulcifer in dress appearance made her appearance.

"I've made you wait. I chose a slightly reserved piece however□□what do you think?"

".....-!?"

Lux spontaneously held his breath after taking a glance at her appearance.

She was beautiful.

She was wearing a smooth jet black dress that made the whiteness of her skin that was like powdered snow became prominent.

The area around her neck that was wrapped with black choker opened widely until her chest, showing the curve of that slender stature even more beautifully and charmingly.



Her long blue hair that was like silk was gently bundled with hair clip and ribbon, spreading downward in a gentle arc.

His feeling was paralyzed because he had gotten used at seeing her from nearby daily, but when she dressed up properly like this, he felt further from her a beauty that was in different dimension.

"Suddenly choosing a dress on the spot is really difficult isn't it? It's good that I can somehow make it look appropriate but□□"

"Ah, it really suit you Krulcifer-san. I thought that you are a princess from somewhere."

Lux spoke with honest intention, but Krulcifer chuckled and she brushed up her hair with a hand that was wrapped in black long glove.

"If it's you a former prince who say it, then I think I can take it a little seriously."

"Err, sorry Krulcifer-san. It's hard for me to say it but.....I, never really attend this kind of party."

Lux honestly confessed that he had no confidence in taking the lead here, but Krulcifer only showed him her usual cool smile.

"If it's a simple dance then I know it, so it will be all right if you match my movement. Let's go."

"□□Right. Please take care of me, Krulcifer-san."

Lux took Krulcifer's hand and they headed toward the dance hall.

And then they enjoyed a wonderful time for a brief moment.

Part 6

"Aa, I'm tired....."

A few dozen minutes later, Lux and Krulcifer who exited the Moon Lamp Mansion sat by sat under the shade of tree of a spacious public park. They were eating skewered roasted meat and fruit pie that they bought from stalls while taking rest.

Lux made mistake several time even though it was a basic dance, but he wished to believe that around the third dance he was starting to get good enough.

Several times at between, some noble asked Krulcifer for a dance, but she decisively refused all of them.

"How unexpected. Even though you almost never act tiredly even when you usually did that much chores."

"This is because of nervousness, surely."

When Lux smiled wryly like that,

"But, there was also gain from this you know? I noticed when we danced together but□□Lux-kun's height, it looks like recently that it's growing a bit isn't it?"

"Krulcifer-san! Really!?"

Lux looked listless because of the fatigue, but hearing that he reflexively bit at it.

Seeing that Krulcifer showed a slightly surprised expression. And then she gently put her hand on Lux's head before averting her face.

".....I'm sorry. It seems that it was just my imagination."

"Krulcifer-san! That's cruel!"

Hearing Krulcifer's seemingly sad voice made Lux yelled with teary eyes.

"Don't be that dejected. Lux-kun has a lot of other lovely virtue right?"

"Wait a second!? Don't crush the possibility of my height growing in the future arbitrarily like that! I'm still in my growth period you know!?"

"Ye, yes..... You're right, it'll be great if that day will come someday."

"Don't say it with that kind of distant look!"

A few seconds after Lux unintentionally raised his voice and

gasped for breath.

Krulcifer who was smiling lightly put her hand on Lux's head once more.

"I'm sorry, I teased you a bit too much. It was the first time I saw Lux-kun's eyes sparkling like that, so I unconsciously enjoyed it too much....."

"....."

After Lux stiffened with a complicated expression, Krulcifer took a deep breath and slowly stood up.

"Thank you for accompanying me today."

"Yo, you don't need to thank me. I also had fun, that□□"

Lux also stood up and faced Krulcifer. Then refreshing wind flowed from between the gaps of the abundantly growing tree, gently shaking the greenery at the surrounding.

"Say, Lux-kun. I have one last personal request, can I?"

"Eh.....?"

"I told you that my house's butler□□Alterize is coming to the capital, but she has been watching us all the time through this date."

"I, is that so!?"

The shocked Lux reflexively ran his gaze around him. Then he noticed a presence of something moving behind the cover of the wide public park's bushes.

When he focused there, he was able to immediately find its true identity thanks to the unique butler uniform.

(Wait, since when she came? Alterize-san.....)

"You don't need to be too bothered. I think that we surely have

accomplished our objective today nicely."

"Yes.....I guess."

Lux didn't know since when Alterize was watching them, but the objective of the request this time was 'pretending that his association with Krulcifer is continuing'. He believed that they certainly had done it well.

"But, I think that it's still slightly insufficient to completely trick her. That's why for the last□□let's see. Can I ask Lux-kun to kiss me from your own initiative?"

"□□Eh? Eeeeh.....!?"

Lux was flustered hearing Krulcifer's speech that was muttered with a slightly embarrassed look.

"Of course, I don't mind if you only pretend. If you brought your face closer to me to a certain degree, I think that will be enough to trick her."

"Ah, ri, right..... The, then, Krulcifer-san□□be careful."

Lux turned his gaze around and checked whether there was any other gaze than Alterize's, after that he slowly brought his face closer toward Krulcifer whose eyes were lightly closed.

After confirming the position of that small and glossy lips, Lux also closed his eyes and stood on his tiptoes, at that moment□□, ".....-!?"

chuu-

The touch of a soft sensation surprised Lux and his eyes snapped wide open.

Even though he had definitely stopped just before his lips touched, when he noticed both their lips and firmly piled on top of one another.

There was the aroma of sweet and graceful perfume, and the

aroma of Krulcifer's own hair.

The soft sensation of the lips felt pleasant, making his instinct hesitated to get away from it immediately.

In the end they separated after exchanging kiss for a few second. Krulcifer whose eyes were opened lightly licked the corner of her lips.

"□□It looks like, our positioning was slightly off."

"Ah, so,sorry. That's□□"

Seeing Krulcifer smiling with her cheeks unusually blushing, the shaken up Lux started to say something before,

"You don't need to apologize. This is the first time I received a kiss from your end but, as I thought□□the sensation is completely different."

Krulcifer averted her gaze from Lux and whispered with a voice that was filled with a hint of intoxication.

"Krulcifer, san?"

For some reason it made the girl who was right before his eyes until now to look unthinkably sexy. Lux's heartbeat was pounding fiercely.

"I wish that in the future you will do it for me by your own will. Then, I'll go report to Alterize so□□see you later."

Krulcifer only said that and she turned around and slowly walked out of the public park.

"....."

A few seconds later after he saw her off, Lux sat down on the spot.

After waiting the heat left from his completely flushed face, he left to fulfill his next request.

Part 7

"Eerr, if I remember correctly, right now Celis-senpai's schedule is□□"

Lux was walking on the bustling street of the royal capital while checking the request schedule that was written on a paper.

He promised to go around the country founding anniversary from the afternoon until the sunset with Celis, but she said that she was going to train at the practice ground inside the castle ground until right before Lux came to pick her up.

When Lux went to the guard's place, Celis wearing her uniform was already waiting in front of it. She turned his way and smiled.

"Thanks for coming, Lux."

"Good afternoon Celis-senpai. I'm sorry to make you wait."

"No, I too only came just now. However that's□□, it's a little troubling."

When Lux approached, Celis's tone dropped a little with her condition looked unusually restless.

".....? What's the matter?"

"That's....., I made a blunder in picking our meeting place. I cannot calm down unless I train every day, so I only did basic training and sword practice but□□"

Lux tilted his head hearing Celis's tone that gave a hint of frustration.

"It's fine. After all Celis-senpai is giving off the nice smell of soap."

"That's not it! I'm not talking about the matter of sweat! Be, because there is this date with you, I properly washed myself after I finished my training so□□tha, that's not it, it's"

Lux smiled wryly seeing Celis who was showing him her flustered self. After that he noticed what she actually wanted to say a bit late.

Countless gazes were directed toward them from the shadow of the castle wall and bushes. The sound of stifled breathing came from those directions.

The reason for that wasn't merely because the castle was nearby and there were many officials there.

Lux instinctually comprehended the reason that showed it.

"Celis-senpai, how well do you know about the terrain of the capital?"

"Eerr, I know enough in general. When I was a child I also lived here to some degree, last year and the year before that too I also came here when summer vacation came."

"Then, what's left is only about the concern of stamina. Can senpai run right now?"

"I have difficulty to understand Lux's question but□□.....-!? Is it something like that?"

Celis tilted her head in puzzlement for a moment, but she immediately noticed and held her breath.

After exhaling lightly, she showed a confident smile and started walking.

"Then, I'll take the lead, but we're going to walk slowly until a street where there is few passerby."

"Ah, please go easy on me....."

Recalling the training camp the other day, Lux said that while smiling wryly.

Celis who had imposed a strict raining on herself since she was little possessed a stamina that would make even man lost their face.

"Then let's go, Lux."

Saying that they walked side by side. Immediately after, the countless presences hiding around there started moving simultaneously. (So.....it's as I thought.)

The gazes that were focused on Lux and Celis since some time ago.

Most likely they were people of the palace who were trying to spy their movement.

In order to shake off those observers, Lux suggested that they took 'escape'.

"Could this be, because of my fault?"

Lux spoke his question while walking on the stone pavement outside the castle.

Currently they were still walking at the level of fast-walking, but they were gradually moving in the speed like running children.

"No, this might be my fault. After all it seems there are people scheming various things behind the scene in the current government office so□□"

"Scheme?"

They bought distance at the straight line of the main street where the visibility was nice, turned into a narrow back alley, and shook off the pursuer.

Their speed wasn't affected at all even while they were conversing normally.

"Perhaps it's better to call it a scramble for interests, and following after that is the factional strife. What I want to talk with you today is also related to that□□oh, I think this far should be fine don't you agree?"

Celis suddenly stopped and looked behind her.

The presence of countless people following them from the castle had entirely vanished within a few minutes.

"I, it seems so....."

It was pathetic if he who was a man lost his breath first, so Lux pretended to be composed, but he was fairly tired.

"However, this strategy is half failure. Even though I've expressly washed off my sweat, now I'm soaked in sweat again."

As expected it would be like that if they ran with their all on the street at summer.

"You're right. I'm also sweaty□□.....-!?"

When Lux was about to agree, he saw it.

The figure of Celis who slightly opened the breast area of her blouse in order to take in the wind, which caused her skin to look flushed.

Perhaps because this was a back alley with the surrounding enclosed by houses and shops, she became somewhat defenseless.

The valley of Celis's breasts that proclaimed their existence strongly even when they were within the uniform caused Lux's gaze to be reflexively attracted in.

"What's wrong Lux? It looks like you are in a daze since just now? Don't tell me your health is"

"N, no, it's nothing at all! Ra, rather than that, about Celis-senpai's talk for me□□?"

Lux averted his gaze in panic and asked once more.

Celis was lightly vigilant toward the surrounding while she slowly started talking.

"Lux. There is one thing that I want to ask you. What do you think about me?"

"Eh.....?"

Lux was bewildered against Celis who suddenly displayed a serious tone and expression.

And then, after thinking a bit for a few seconds,

"I think Celis-senpai is really serious and just a little bit awkward but□□you are someone that is really reliable."

"That's, I also think the same of you."

When Lux told her that with a small smile, Celis immediately replied back.

"I dragged along the tendency of the old empire, feared to make a mistake, and kept away male at distance. You saved me who was like that. For me, you are a really reliable boy friend who I was able to make for the first time."

Celis put her hand on her chest and whispered earnestly.

"And so I want to talk about this. I received instruction from my father through a letter telling me to win you over. He instructed me to use my position as the leader of Syvalles to put you under my observation and jurisdiction□□"

"....."

The instruction from one of the four great nobles, Dist Ralgris that came to Celis.

Lux instantly predicted the general objective and meaning of such instruction.

"No matter what kind of thinking father have, I don't intend to follow his instruction this time. In the case that we come to a confrontation, I'll plead to him directly to withdraw that instruction. □□But, he might bring trouble to Lux somewhere outside my sight. I still don't know what to do about that, but....."

"It's fine senpai."

"Eh.....?"

Lux smiled to assure Celis who looked confused.

"I'm happy that Celis-senpai are worried about me, but it'll also pain me if you come into a dispute with Ralgris house. I think it will be fine if you just pretend to follow the letter's instruction moderately."

"But that's, my father might come to interfere with you directly then....."

"It's all right. I'm used to something like that since I was a child. Besides□□, I already resolved myself to get involved with this country again, not only as a criminal imposed with odd jobs, but also in different shape."

Lux declared with his gaze staring straight at Celis.

"Lux, you□□"

"In the first place, it became like this only because I did things that made me stood out every time, just like Airi always told me, this is me reaping what I sow."

When Lux smiled wryly, Celis's eyes opened wide in surprise,

"This is troubling. I talked of this with the resolve to be blamed by you but□□my worry is cleared up already."

Celis slowly casted down her eyes and made a small smile.

"I understand. I'll carefully handle the matter of putting you under my jurisdiction, but I'm thinking to reply back that I don't want to force you. But□□if, in case that my father tries to do something, please talk to me anytime. I won't permit you to stay quiet. After all I also want to become a senior that you can and ought to respect."

Saying that, Celis slowly offered her right hand.

".....I will, I promise."

When Lux gently took that hand, the tension of the two abruptly felt loosened.

"Even so, it's unfortunate."

Celis suddenly muttered when they were about to exit the back alley into the main street.

"What is?"

"No, I was thinking that if my talk with you finished early, perhaps we can look around the festival for a bit□□"

Lux noticed when he saw Celis running her gaze around looking vaguely dispirited.

Several messengers in the palace were investigating into Celis's movement with Lux.

Although they had shaken off everyone just now, if they enjoyed the festival in a place where there was many people, they would immediately get found out by those people.

"Ah,it, it's not like you have to worry about it because my objective has been accomplished! It's not like I want to have fun looking around the festival slowly for sure this time because until now I have never gotten the chance to look around the festival properly, there is no such thing at all so□□"

When Lux noticed that and sent his gaze at Celis, Celis threw out her true feeling in the open in panic.

"Ahaha, please wait a second. I'll think a bit so□□"

Lux smiled wryly and retorted so, then he got an idea.

(But this, we might need a bit of help from someone.....)

When Lux was thinking that, he caught sight of a trio of girls walking on the main street.

".....Ah, it's Lux-chi and Celis-senpai. What's up? At this kind of

place□□"

Tillfur of Triad noticed them and called out.

It seemed the three were also sightseeing the royal capital for relaxation from the All-Dragon Battle.

"What a coincidence. However it smell a bit suspicious that you two are having date at that kind of deserted place you know?"

"Yes. I think I have the duty to report this to Airi as her best friend."(TN: A bit of reminder. When Noct said yes or no at the beginning of her sentence, in the raw she isn't using Japanese word like 'hai' or 'ie', but she is actually using English word of 'yes' and 'no'. She also said 'my lord' at English)

"You don't need to do that! It's not like we are hiding anything that make us feel guilty I'm telling you□□!"

Lux objected at Sharis's grin and Noct's mutter while he lightly explained the situation.

He told them about how he wanted to look around the festival with Celis and how several spies were searching for them.

"And so, I want to ask a bit of help from everyone□□"

Lux consulted his thinking of how to shake off the pursuer to the three people of Triad, then,

"That's good and all, but somehow I'm not motivated~. Even us here are bored with a lot of free time. And yet doing that will only make Lux-chi and Celis-senpai to get a great date without anything in it for us in the end~"

Tillfur nodded her head in the beginning while showing a complicated sulky face at the end.

In respond Sharis plopped her hand on Tillfur's head and spoke admonishingly.

"Fuh, Tillfur too is still young. At this kind of time it's more

sensible to make them owe us without getting strangely obstinate. Especially because Lux-kun is the type who will return the favor properly."

"Yes. I judged that cooperating with Lux-san and Celis-san here will be a worldly wise decision. After all the two of them are really capable people."

When Noct also continued like that, Tillfur showed her usual bright smile.

"That's true. Then~, there is my acquaintance dressmaker nearby, so wait a bit here."

(I, it feels like it'll be scary later but.....well, it's fine I guess.)

"However, Lux. Just what could you possibly think about?"

Tillfur showed up once more faster than Lux could explain to the puzzled Celis.

"See that shop, you can enter from the backdoor so no one will know. I've talked to them so it's fine."

"Thank you□□let's go, Celis-senpai."

Lux smiled and pulled Celis's hand, heading toward that dressmaker shop.

□□Thirty minutes later.

A noble lady and a butler were standing in front of the dressing room inside the shop.

"Wha, what do you think□□Lux? Does it look like we can hide well like this?"

A girl wearing pure white proper and prim dress, and a hat with wide brim of the same color on her head.

The outfit was reserved and not showy, but it didn't harm the elegance possessed by the girl wearing it at all.

Thanks to the thin dress that made the body line stood out distinctly, Lux received a charming impression that was several level above the usual uniform appearance.

The parasol the girl was holding was decorated with ornament, which gorgeously gave color to the whole body that looked slightly meek.

The parasol's purpose was to prevent sunburn, but it also functioned as a props to hide Celis's face.

"Uwaaa..... I don't want to do this~. She is too beautiful that I'm feeling down just from looking~....."

Tillfur who helped with the clothes changing hung her head down with a complicated look.

Fundamentally the selection members were obligated to wear their uniform when going out during the period of All-Dragon Battle, but in order to avoid the observers' gaze right now, Celis dressed up like a noble young lady who came to the capital.

"However, it's beyond expectation when Celis is dressing as a lady like this. Lux-kun also look suitable in that. If it's this then it will do somehow."

Even Sharis who came together with them praised the finished up appearance of the two in satisfaction.

"Ahaha. Though this appearance is really stuffy....., I'll do my best."

On the other hand, Lux was wearing a butler uniform with black basic tone.

His standing out silver hair was hidden with black wig, so Lux's impression was greatly different from usual.

Furthermore he felt the heat a lot because the black suit had little skin exposure, but it couldn't be helped.

By the way the Triad at first tried to dress Lux in woman

clothing, but this time he refused it with all his strength.

"Yes. With this both of you are a noble lady and her butler that came to watch the festival. Please enjoy it to your heart's content."

When Noct concluded their tactic this time at the end, Lux showed a smile and nodded.

"Right. Thank you everyone. We are off."

"Thank you for your cooperation. The, then Lux please treat me well."

Lux and Celis thanked the Triad and left the dressmaker shop.

The promised afternoon date resumed.

"Well then my lady, is there somewhere you wish to look around at?"

"N, no that's, I'm the senior here. I've been living longer in the capital, so I'll be the one to show you"

Lux smiled wryly seeing Celis suddenly showed her usual seriousness.

"Right now senpai is just a noble lady. Then, how about we look around a large place?"

They traveled to the direction of the central block using a coach before looking around a crowded place that was centered on a main street with many street stalls.

"Ah, there is a stall of baked sweets over there. How about it, my lady."

"N, no! As the leader of Syvalles, I'll refrain from food that makes you fat. And so, something like a conduct of eating sweet thing is not permitted."

"It will be fine if it's only a little. Also Celis-senpai, you aren't fat at all."

"Is, is that so.....? N, no□□as I thought it's no good! I won't be able to be example to other people if I don't comply to a discipline that I imposed myself."

Right after she said so with an obstinate tone, Celis stared fixedly at the stall's direction with a longing expression.

"Haa, the aroma of baked sweet is torture..... I was scolded by father when I ate too much of it as a child, so I haven't eaten any properly for many years. But, there is also no way I can break the rule□□"

"The, then, I want to eat so I'll go buy it!"

Celis was whispering with a depressed expression that looked really down, so Lux stood up in the stall's line resolutely.

And then he bought a tart with the biggest size, split it into two, and offered it to Celis.

"I'm sorry. I blundered and bought the large one, so can senpai help me eating it a bit?"

"I, is that so? Then, just for a bit....."

Even like that Celis accepted the baked sweet with reservation, but after taking a bite, she showed a melting expression that was incomparable with her usual dignified expression.

".....It's happiness. Being able to eat sweet thing for the first time in several years. Lux, thank you very much."

Seeing Celis feeling so happy that she was moved to tears, Lux felt glad that he bought it forcefully.

(Or rather, Celis-senpai, you held yourself back too much.....)

Lux felt that this older girl who was serious and awkward like usual was charming. After that their date continued.

Until the middle so that they didn't stand out they walked and talk while focusing on sightseeing the events, but when they got

used to it they also went to place like auction market or divination stall at the public place. They also participated in wine tasting convention (Celis mistaken it as normal drink) that was done outdoor, and became infatuated with the enthusiasm that was unique to festival.

The atmosphere that couldn't be experienced in the normal academy life, where rank was put aside that could only be experienced in festival day.

Also thanks to the role of young lady and her butler that they acted, they cut loose a bit and enjoyed the anniversary festival that was done once a year.

"Here, water. □□Also if there is something senpai want to eat, I will go buy it from the stall."

Lux made Celis sat down on a curb at a public park because she was staggering from drunkenness. He said that with a gentle smile.

The sun was already mostly setting down, the time was changing from the dusk into the night.

"Thank you very much. It has been a long time since I feel like this. I want to taste this atmosphere more as long as the time allows."

After Lux handed over a cup that was filled with water, Celis smiled and she suddenly turned her gaze at the surrounding.

Her flushed skin that was dyed red and her disordered breathing looked strangely captivating. Lux felt his heart spontaneously skipped a beat just from looking.

After that, Celis looked like she suddenly became aware of herself and she straightened her back in hurry.

"N, no..... As I thought it's no good. Because I have responsibility as the older one, I cannot trouble you for more than this. After this I'll properly escort you back as your senior."

It was Celis's usual dignified tone.

But, she was drunk so it was funny how she slurred. Lux smiled wryly.

"I understand. Then please take care of me until our inn, Celis-senpai."

At the end Lux also responded while stopping the acting of being a young lady and her butler.

With the surrounding getting darker it also became hard to see, so Lux also took off his black wig.

(It's really hot.....)

There was also no sign of observer, the possibility of them getting discovered must be low. But just in case they chose back street where there was few sign of life to return back to their inn's location.

The cool evening wind felt pleasant against their body that was flushed from the heat of the festival and sunlight.

"Lux, is amazing."

"Eh.....?"

Lux spontaneously reacted to the words Celis muttered beside him.

"You are working really hard for everyone's sake. Even though you are the only boy in the academy, you are idolized by everyone. Unlike me, you aren't feared or avoided."

".....There is no such thing. I'm only being helped by my current environment."

"But, I too cannot lose. If you are doing your best to persist in your ideal, then I too have to work hard to get closer to my own ideal. I don't want to lose you like that time with Wade-sensei, where you will have to shoulder everything by yourself."

At the practice time in the Ries Island last time, Lux who had a

bout with Celis and saw her movement deliberately didn't give her any instruction.

A Drag-Knight with strength that was perfected to Celis's level had no weakness that stood out.

Whether it was her handling of her Divine Drag-Ride Lindwurm, and her heavy attack by doing simultaneous offensive with her one Drag-Ride, also her swift thought that calculated the optimum solution in every situation by the book, her every skill and ability was at the level that was nearly at the peak.

Then, there was only one thing that he could assign to her.

Once, Lux developed three kind of hidden techniques by continuously exploring the operating technique of Drag-Ride that in a glance only looked reckless.

When he instructed Celis, he also told her to seek for that.

And then a few days after they returned from the training camp□□when Lux woke up from his sleep that was due to the exhaustion caused by Over Limit, Celis mastered that technique.

That was the reason Lux decided that he would accept a special request from her as her reward.

"Therefore I won't lose, Lux. I too will continue to pursue the path of Drag-Knight using you as the model."

"Yes, please take care of me from now on too Celis-senpai.
□□!?"

Right after Lux responded so to Celis's muttering, he felt a kind of presence and tension ran through Lux's spine.

".....? What's the matter, Lux?"

"□□Be quiet. Please follow me, this way."

Lux lowered his voice as much as possible and spoke with a strong tone. He then pulled Celis's hand and led her into a back

street with no sign of life.

Celis who was a little drunk didn't notice, but Lux undoubtedly heard several footsteps following them.

The footsteps were following when he escaped.

It seemed that they noticed Lux and Celis as expected regardless of this darkness.

(The footsteps are heavy. And then, this faint sound of sword guard, don't tell me□□!?)

This wasn't the observers that were chasing Lux from the castle.

If these people had weapon hanging on their waist, then they might be thief or perhaps assassin from the rebel army.

"Kuh.....!"

Thinking about Lux's decoy role that would begin tonight and Celis's match for the next day, he wished to avoid a battle here.

Lux kept holding Celis's hand and entered into the other side of a small shed nearby as though to follow his inevitable thought.

"Lu, Lux? Wha, what are you doing taking me to this kind of place?"

"Shh, hold down your voice. The enemy will pass through here so□□"

Saying that, Lux entered the gap between the furniture left behind there to hide Celis behind him.

But, because it was dark and he couldn't see under his feet, he stumbled on something like a squared timber and Celis's body tilted.

"Uwah.....!?"

In order to save Celis who was falling face up, Lux also got

carried by the momentum and he fell.

Fortunately there was something like an old sofa behind Celis, so the impact wasn't hard.

But, Lux's body was accidentally sticking close on Celis's body, as though he was pressing down on the body of the collapsed Celis.

"□□!?"

The body warmth of the drunk Celis and the sensation of the voluptuous breast flattened under him.

The unique sweet aroma that could be felt from nearby girl made Lux's head seethed.

"Lu, Lux....., this is□□!"

"Ple, please endure it just for a bit more. The pursuers' footsteps are approaching near."

Inside the darkness of their shelter where he couldn't even see the front well, Lux told Celis that while repressing the fast beating of his heart and his excitement.

Honestly he knew only too well just how bad their posture was, but it was dangerous to stand up right now and made a sound.

He could only resolve himself here and waited for thing to pass.

(The number of footsteps is three□□. They are close but, they should be still unaware of our location.....)

Lux made such judgment while deciding that in any event he had to stand up even if it was only himself. He slowly tried to lift his body slowly so to not make any sound.

In order to do that, his hand was going to push on the sofa while his body was still covering over Celis, it was then□□,

munyu

"Fuah.....!?"

Celis's voice leaked out along with soft elastic sensation in his hand.

It seemed that because he couldn't see his hand really well, it touched Celis's breast instead of the sofa.

(Wait, this is bad! At this rate□□)

Lux tried to remove his hand, but at that moment, countless footsteps became louder. Lux became even more flustered and in panic his hand fumbled around in order to push on the sofa.

Midway he could hear Celis's stifled voice, but a few seconds later Lux somehow stood up.



When he hurriedly put his guard up to his surrounding, the presences and footsteps were vanishing.

".....We're saved, aren't we?"

After looking out and checked around, Lux turned around and

offered his hand to Celis who was pushed down.

"Celis-senpai. Are you okay? Your hand□□"

"Ye, yes..... I'm fine, but"

After grasping her hand tightly and pulled her up, she breathed roughly.

Lux tilted his head. Celis averted her gaze from him and her face reddened.

"Ple, please don't rub my breast so many times like that. I, if that is continued more than that, I'll become strange....."

"I, I'm sorry-!"

Lux who noticed the true identity of the softness that both his hands felt before this yelled so in panic.

(No, no wonder it felt really pleasant..... □□Not that!)

When Lux worried how he was going to apologize with his chaotic mind,

"I, It can't be helped. Fro, from the story that I heard, it seems that a girl has to be resolved to some extent when a male led them to a dark place, so I'm resigned."

"No, I'm saying that's not it! It's not like I brought Celis-senpai here with impure thought□□"

Lux tried to justify himself toward Celis who was starting to interpret the event somewhat peculiarly but,

"By, by all rights it feels like this kind of deed must not be done because it's still too early but, today Lux has been a really great help to me so.....I, I'll specially permit it."

Celis arbitrarily understood it like that, so Lux too gave up explaining it for more than that.

"The, then let's go back Lux. Your childhood friend is surely waiting in the inn right now."

Lux nodded to Celis who showed him a small smile and they started their way back once more.

After that they were able to return to the inn safely without any problem.

Part 8

"My my, Lux-kun, you are slightly late. Philuffy has been waiting long you know?"

After Lux changed back to his uniform and entered the inn, the headmaster Relie came as though she had been waiting.

There was no time left, so Lux immediately headed toward the entrance.

The place's interior was designed with glossy olive brown color and red carpet. And then, the dull orange color of the chandelier illuminated the room. Lux found the girl's figure when he arrived there.

"Sorry I'm late!Phi, chan?"

Lux who called out like that instantly stiffened on the spot.

The one who was there wasn't the usual Philuffy.

She was wearing a faintly pink colored dress that was decorated with frills and countless ribbons.

Her hair that was usually split and tied up to left and right was bundled up with a small barrette, giving her a hint of adult impression that was the opposite of her childish look.

Although her voluptuous breasts that protruded out pointedly and also her absentminded expressionless face were exactly from the usual Philuffy, and yet□□her fairytale-like beauty caused Lux to

mistake her as a different person.

"Welcome back, Lu-chan."

That slow paced voice and the faint nuance of happiness pulled Lux back into reality.

"Ri, right. I'm back..... Tha, that's□□the dress, it looks good on you."

The face of his childhood friend that he should be familiar with for some reason looked more dazzling than usual. Lux couldn't look straight at her.

"Thank you. Then, let's go."

"Both of you be careful. □□Lux-kun. Take care of my little sister okay?"

Lux nodded at Relie's words and he left the inn together with Philuffy.

The capital where the sun had set was covered with the curtain of night. The light of the stars and countless lamps faintly illuminated the streets.

Lux took the hand that Philuffy quietly offered and they headed to the central street.

The national park was located further at the center of the central block. The path from there that connected to the cathedral that was a bit north from it, and then continued until the castle was the main route of the country founding anniversary.

At this time, because the festival was approaching the end, it was the custom to spend one's time slowly while worshipping the statue of spirit that was carried from the cathedral until the castle using horse carriage.

By offering prayer to the spirit statue that was passing through before one's eyes, people wished for safety for the whole year.

Lux was also heading to the central street that was crowded with people in order to do that too, but,

"Eh.....?"

Suddenly Philuffy's feet stopped walking. Lux turned around and he tilted his head in puzzlement.

Philuffy stared fixedly at Lux's face with an atmosphere that was different from usual.

"What's wrong? To pray to the spirit statue, we have to get a bit nearer□□"

"Rather than that, let's go there, Lu-chan."

Philuffy turned a straightforward gaze to above.

Ahead of her gaze was the location further than the national park, the third floor of the cathedral.

"Surely we can pray, from there too."

"Ri, right..... Got it."

Lux nodded to Philuffy's words and the two entered the cathedral.

"□□Are you really, okay with here? We cannot pray with the statue right before our eyes here though?"

"Yes."

Philuffy nodded. Lux followed what she said and sat down there.

The second floor of the cathedral was opened to the public until the end of the anniversary. Lux and Philuffy were sitting side by side at the jutting out balcony of that second floor.

From there they could look down and watch the spirit statue above the horse carriage that was passing through nearby right at that timing.

However, perhaps because a lot of people tried to look at the statue from nearby, there was practically nobody around the two.

The two sat side by side on a stone bench while staring at the street and people that were colored by the faint light through the surrounding's gap.

It was a quiet time with both of them not talking to each other.

"Say, Phi-chan. Is there something you want to buy or anything□□"

Lux spoke to Philuffy so to not make her bored, then,

"Lu-chan, you can rest you know?"

"Eh.....?"

When Lux tilted his head, Philuffy's innocent golden pupils peered fixedly into Lux's face.

"Lu-chan. You look tired, but I'm happy, that you're thinking about me."

'I'm not tired.'

Lux tried to immediately refute like that, but his thought halted.

Because in fact, he had fun with Krulcifer and Celis, but because he had walked around the capital that he was unfamiliar with under blazing sun, it was true that he was tired.

"That's why□□it's no good if you don't rest properly, you know?"

When Lux fell silent, Philuffy said that and lightly tapped on her thighs. Her eyes turned on him as though urging him to do something.

".....Wait!? That, do you mean□□?"

"Sleep here. The seat, is a bit hard after all."

It seemed that Lux's imagination was right on the mark.

This was that thing called lap pillow, but because Philuffy was wearing summer dress, the length of her skirt was as short as the academy uniform or perhaps even shorter.

When she sat down that white charming thighs were exposed, so his head would lie down on there.

Furthermore depending on the direction Lux's face was turning at, it felt like he would be able to peek until the depth of Philuffy's skirt with impunity in that state.

Lux unconsciously imagined that and he gulped, even so,

"I, I'm fine. Be, besides, because it's night this place is not standing out but, if other people see us from below□□it will be a bit embarrassing."

"I don't, really care you know?"

".....Isn't that right."

Seeing Philuffy saying that with her unchanging serious face and tilted head, Lux thought that he failed to convince her.

And then, Philuffy who entered this mode of hers would not relent by any means.

In the end, Lux could only yield.

"The, then.....I'll borrow your lap for a bit okay?"

"Nn....."

Seeing Philuffy nodded slightly, Lux slowly put his head on those thighs and laid down on the bench.

"Uwah.....!?"

Instantly the softness that touched the back of his head and the nape of his neck caused Lux to raise his voice spontaneously.

The sensation of slightly cold skin felt pleasant to his body that

was flushed from summer's heat.

And then, when he breathed in the faint sweet smell wafting from Philuffy, strength left Lux's body.

(For some reason, this feels really good.....)

On one hand Lux felt his heart throbbing hard from the softness of her thighs and the sensation of the skirt's smooth fabric, but on the other hand there was the pleasant feeling of relief that would make him fell asleep at this rate.

Suddenly a refreshing wind blew. Philuffy softly caressed Lux's head.

"You can sleep like this. I'll wake you up when the spirit statue go to the castle."

"Ah, ok..... Then, please."

When Lux turned his gaze to right above him, he had to look at Philuffy's face across her large breasts, which made his gaze to wander around spontaneously.

He felt slight embarrassment and hard throbbing in his heart toward her body that touched him.

And then Lux slowly closed his eyes along with a mysterious tranquility.

"....."

Above the balcony where only the faraway tumult and the night wind could be heard, Philuffy gazed at the city's lighting with the head of Lux who was starting to make small sleeper's breathing staying still on her lap.

Her face was expressionless like usual, but there was the same hint of tranquility like what her childhood friend the young man had emerging there.

"Lu-chan. You see, I'm actually not as you think you know?"

Philuffy dropped her gaze on Lux's face with her usual dispassionate expression and voice.

"In the past, when Okaa-san died from sickness, everyone cried a lot□□both Otou-san and Onee-chan, they looked really suffering. That was why, I didn't cry. So that everyone wouldn't worry, so that they wouldn't be even sadder than that, I pretended to be alright all the time, even when other painful thing happened. But□□"

Philuffy paused her words momentarily and slowly inhaled slightly.



"When Lu-chan covered up for me at the palace, and at Ries Island too, at those times I actually wanted help. Even when I pretended to not notice, Lu-chan always noticed for me."

The thing that she lost without noticing while she was pretending to be all right.

Since she was a child, she had been hiding all this time, locked behind that expressionless face.

The true feeling that even Philuffy herself didn't notice, Lux made her to notice it.

"Thank you, Lu-chan. For finding me□□"

Her usual expressionless face crumbled slightly and Philuffy smiled.

She gently caressed the young man's hair and look into that face lovingly.

And then, she slowly put her lips on the lips of the peaceful face of her sleeping childhood friend.

Part 9

Dozens of minute later.

When Lux woke up from his sleep, he slowly lifted his head from Philuffy's lap pillow.

It was a really pleasant sensation so he was reluctant to part from it, but Lux still had things to do.

"Thank you Phi-chan. Thanks to you I'm feeling really comfortable."

"I'm glad."

When Lux faced Philuffy once again and thanked her, she showed him her usual very faint smile that only Lux could understand.

Perhaps because of her dress appearance that was different from usual and the faint light illuminating her, she looked so lovely that Lux was unconsciously charmed by her.

"It's still a bit early, but I have to go to where Lisha-sama is, any time now□□!?"

The words of Lux who stood up from the bench were cut off in the middle.

Inside the tranquility of the anniversary's night, there was intense killing intent that resembled the spray of blood in the battlefield mixing in.

□□Nearby.

The owner of the presence was most likely in the vicinity of this cathedral.

"Phi-chan. Can you go back to the inn from here alone?"

"Yes. No problem."

"Sorry I'll go for a bit! Really thank you for today!"

Lux said only that and went down the stair, left the cathedral and chased after the presence.

Because people was gathering in front of the castle gate where the spirit statue would head for the last, there was practically no sign of people nearby.

After Lux walked a bit through the street heading to the castle, a girl stood in front of Lux.

The native dress of foreign country□□the black outfit with high exposure rate and that black hair shined beautifully from the night's lamp.

The Empire's Assassin Blade□□Kirihome Yoruka.

The same like when he met her for the first time in the academy previously, a bewitching smile that stirred up emotion and uneasiness at the same time was tugged on her lips. She was merely staring on Lux with that smile.

"Long time no see Aruji-sama. It's an honor to be able to meet you again."

Yoruka showed a cheerful smile earlier than Lux could raise his voice.

"But, Aruji-sama is a bit too careless. Aruji-sama is the only man left from Arcadia Empire, so I believe that you ought to place a guard that is a bit more capable in your side."

"Don't tell me, the footsteps pursuing us at that time was□□?"

Lux who heard Yoruka's words reflexively asked that.

Several pursuers followed Lux and Celis when they were in the middle of going back from their date.

The reason that their footsteps disappeared in the middle coincided perfectly with Yoruka's existence.

"Yes, it's just as Aruji-sama surmised. But□□that's not all you know?"

Yoruka suddenly turned her gaze to the street's corner□□at the narrow opening of an alley.

Over there was the figures of several people lying down on top of each other.

"Those are the assassins aiming at Aruji-sama just now. They are carrying short sword coated with poison so□□surely, they planned to slip inside the crowd and attack there. Their method was ill prepared though."

"Are they as I thought, Hayes's.....?"

A special unit that wasn't regular army□□surely they were several names from among the company that was previously led by Sania and others who were Hayes's subordinate.

"Please rest assured. Because I have exterminated the human pursuer too with my Yato no Kami's search function. In this capital there is no more enemy of Aruji-sama."

"You protected me during the festival?"

"There is no way I can let any riffraff other than me to kill Aruji-sama."

"....."

Lux responded at Yoruka's seductive smile with silence.

When they parted at Cross Field, Yoruka said that she would restore the old empire.

Those words most likely weren't a lie.

"If Aruji-sama is going to walk for a while then I will accompany you. Though if I am a bother, allow me to protect from the shadow again□□"

".....Can you come together with me? I still hasn't ask anything about Yoruka yourself after all."

"Then, please treat me well Aruji-sama."

Yoruka nodded and followed right behind Lux.

When Lux gestured her to walk at his side, Yoruka lightly bowed and stood at Lux's side.

"Please don't hold back on my account, I will be happy if Aruji-sama ask anything. In any case I have no intention to fight against Aruji-sama tonight."

Lux didn't know whether Yoruka's words were honest or not, but hesitating would be a waste of time, so he determined himself and got to the point.

"Yoruka, you were a princess at the nation of Koto weren't you? Why are you□□not a princess anymore?"

"....."

"Sorry. Perhaps I'm asking about something unpleasant. But□□"

"Because I don't have the qualification."

Yoruka muttered suggestively with unchanging smile.

"Qualification.....?"

Right after Lux's mutter, Yoruka ran toward a stall that was remaining at the street's corner and beckoned at Lux with her hand.

Over there was glass wine for the share of two.

"Please Aruji-sama. If it's alright with you I'll also taste it for poison."

"After this I have a bit of plan though....."

"I don't know about that, but getting a bit drunk will also raise your vigor you know?"

In the end Lux folded against Yoruka's forcefulness and drained up a glass.

Perhaps because Lux wasn't used to alcohol his body immediately became hot inside.

When Lux loosened up his collar slightly, small wind blew from his side.

".....Wait, what are you doing with that?"

When he looked, Yoruka was fanning at Lux's direction using a half round paper in her hand.

"This is what they call a folding fan in Koto. It doesn't exist in this country, but it's convenient when summer come you know?"

".....Thank you. But I'm fine. Rather than that Yoruka, what do you mean by saying that you have no qualification?"

"A monster without human heart', my father said that to me. Since I was a child□□no, since I was born, somewhere inside me is broken."

Yoruka self-deprecated herself with a tone that was vaguely

lonely.

"The first time I killed, it was the assassin that was employed by a concubine. Inside the castle where I spent my childhood, it was always a whirlpool of violence and scheme, no one knew when they would be killed. But, I have a talent. The talent to see through a person's killing intent and kill my opponent without any hesitation□□"

"....."

The dispute for throne succession right inside a confined world.

For Lux who had spent an oppressive childhood inside the imperial court, he felt like he could understand it somehow.

"After that, father also died from sickness and the country was succeeded by my twin little brother who was still a child then. Unlike me, he was a sickly child, but my brother possessed a splendid human heart. In order to protect the nation of Koto and its people, he did everything in his power despite his inexperience. He even swore that he would protect his elder sister, me who was hated and shunned by the surrounding□□what a stupid child he was."

The poison of the muttered word erased Yoruka's calm smile.

The war princess of Koto that even the overwhelming force of Arcadia Empire couldn't defeat.

Lux heard that due to the contract she exchanged with the emperor, Yoruka was put under the empire's control.

"Don't tell me, my father took your brother hostage, and force the contract□□"

Lux immediately thought so, but he immediately noticed that it was strange.

The reason was if Yoruka's little brother was still alive, it would become a talk whether someone of the new kingdom had captured him, and if that little brother had died, it was meaningless for

Yoruka to be completely loyal to the old empire even now.

"□□If I'm allowed to say despite how rude this will sound, Aruji-sama resembles my little brother. Even though the hair and eye color, the strength, and everything between the two of you are completely different."

Hearing that question, Yoruka abruptly made a soft smile and stared on Lux's face.

"....."

"My little brother died a long time ago. □□But there was just one promise that I made. I promised that I will continue being a servant who devote my loyalty until the end for the sake of my lord who is my brother."

□□Lux guessed something from that sentence.

In order to fulfill that promise, Yoruka obeyed the contract she tied with the old empire and fought.

"I intend to fulfill my contract with the emperor of Arcadia Empire□□your father. I will protect the empire, and if it's stolen then I will take it back. As the last person who devote her loyalty to the old empire, I intend to destroy the new kingdom(this country)."

"Yoruka, you□□"

"Can you allow me to listen to your answer, Aruji-sama? What do you intend to do with this country?"

Lux's voice was erased by Yoruka's smiling face.

Even without any words, the presence the girl was clad with told him clearly.

That she absolutely had no intention to pull back anymore□□.

"Even so, I cannot comply with your will. Because□□"

"It's unfortunate. Even though there are a lot of important things

that I wish to report to Aruji-sama right away."

When Yoruka said that with a smile that was completely unchanged from before, they had approached near the castle's gate before they knew it.

His appointed time with Lisha wouldn't be that much longer after this.

"Can I ask you one last thing? Was it you, who controlled a Drag-Knight of new kingdom's military and attacked a selection member of Wanheim Principality?"

"Who knows? I really don't understand what is Aruji-sama talking about."

Yoruka answered instantly with a bright smile that played the fool.

"□□Really?"

When Lux asked once more with a cold glint in his eyes that was different from usual, Yoruka also changed her smile into a fearless one.

"This is unexpected isn't it? I thought that Aruji-sama is similar with my little brother, but I misunderstood."

Yoruka finished that sentence and twirled on the spot, then she brought her face close in front of Lux's eyes.

"Aruji-sama is similar with me. You look like you are fitting into this country more than anyone□□but you are a heretic whose nature cannot comply with this world more than anyone. Though I don't know if Aruji-sama is the same like me who is broken right from the start or not."

"....."

"My protection ends here. Please don't die until you are killed by me. I too□□won't die until I am killed by you."

Yoruka said just that before turning on her heel without waiting for Lux's reply.

And then, she slowly vanished into the darkness.

"Fuu....."

When her presence completely disappeared, Lux let out his breath and looked down.

Even more question popped up from the conversation just now.

He didn't talk to her about the imperial capital recapture plan that was formulated by Heiburg's military division and the rebel army, but the possibility was high that she was also related with that.

After all putting aside the substantiality of it, at the surface her objective was the reinstatement of Arcadia Empire.

"Important things he want to report right away.....huh."

He didn't understand the true meaning of Yoruka's words.

But, something sounded the alarm bell inside Lux.

At this rate, would it end with only fighting her in the future, he wondered.

Part 10

A few minutes later. Lux slipped out of the crowd, received permission from the security guard of the castle gate, and entered inside the castle.

Inside the private room he was allowed to enter, Lisha in dress appearance was sitting.

"I'm sorry to make you wait, Lisha-sama."

"Yo, you're slow, geez. To make a princess wait, your awareness as my knight is lacking."

"I'm sorry.....wait, eh? What's the matter?"

Lisha usually would puffed out her chest self-assuredly, but seeing her vaguely looking discomposed made Lux tilted his head in puzzlement.

When he looked really carefully, her hands and knees were trembling slightly.

"Wha, what? I'm feeling nervous, so this can't be helped."

"No, I too understand Lisha-sama's feeling."

When Lux smiled wryly, Lisha slightly looked down while making a self-mocking smile.

"That....., even I understand it already. I should just act like myself without getting too worked up. I know that much. But□□"

From the circumstance where she was once abandoned by her real father the great man Count Atismata, Lisha thought that she had no qualification as princess.

Even so Lisha did her best every day, trying to become the princess of the new kingdom that could be recognized by everyone.

That was why Lux gently took the hand of that girl who he respected and loved.

"Ah....."

"It'll be fine. Because I know, more than anyone, that Lisha-sama is worthy as the princess of the new kingdom□□"

".....I see. If you say that, then that must be true."

Seeing Lux smile, Lisha nodded a little with a dazed expression.

Her cheeks were dyed slightly red.

"Then□□for now, can you hold my hand just for a bit?"

"Yes. By your will."

A quiet time with just the two of them flowed for only ten-odd second.

Right after that, the speech time arrived.

At the same time when the spirit statue entered inside the castle, Lisha showed her face from the second floor balcony inside the castle.

"Everyone. You did well to gather here at this night! With gratitude that the country founding anniversary has been carried out safely this time, allow this me who am the princess of the new kingdom to speak the concluding speech."

Perhaps because of the quiet night, Lisha's voice transmitted well through the ground inside the castle.

"I hate a long talk so I'll get to the point. The new kingdom can reach until this far is thanks to the cooperation of you the people. My gratitude for that. □□And then, regarding the future, allow me to speak about my thought for a bit."

The people who was energized by the lingering heat of the festival listened carefully with a serious expression.

"Today, I chose my exclusive knight. He will become my right-hand man, who will accompany me from here on through my various duties as my guard and aide. That man is□□this guy."

The moment Lisha pointed her hand, Lux walked to her side, illuminated by the torch fire behind.

And then, the people who saw that stiffened with shock on their face. Commotion ensued.

"O, oi. That person, could that be the chores prince?"

"Recently he wasn't in the capital but, so this is why.....?"

"The old empire's□□criminal"

Unrest spread through the people like a ripple, but Lisha didn't

pay it any mind and declared.

"Just as everyone also aware of, he is the former prince of the old Arcadia Empire. Lux Arcadia."

Right after that, an even bigger ripple spread through the gathered people.

That was only natural.

The evil source that governed tyrannically for a long time and created the custom of chauvinism.

And now the princess of the new kingdom Atismata that destroyed all that under the name of justice was choosing the former prince who should be an enemy as her aide.

"The reason why I chose this guy is because he is a survivor of the family that once corrupted this country and this is to make him redeem his sin as criminal□□that isn't the reason at all. It's because I met this man, spent time together in a same place, and thought that he is a man worthy of trust whether it's his ability or his heart!"

But, Lisha wasn't perturbed even against such reaction from the people and raised her voice resolutely.

"Since the old empire perished, not enough time has passed yet to make us forget about the convention of the past. I also understand about the confusion of everyone. I'm also prepared to be criticized. Currently the people of the palace are objecting of this decision of mine desperately. But□□"

Lisha took a breath before she directed a straightforward gaze to the people below once more.

Those were self-assured crimson eyes that were like a pointed sword, the same eyes when she first met Lux.

"The way of the country that I'm aiming from here on is a country that isn't imprisoned by the tie of the past or convention! I will accept failure and mistake, and focus at the very best future above it. I chose this man as my right hand man, my knight, is the proof of

that. That's why□□"

She paused her words temporarily, looked around below as though to observe the people's reaction, before continuing.

"I won't ask you to understand immediately. But, watch over us for a while. Look for yourself, whether the thing that I believe in is really the correct thing or not□□that is a request from this still inexperienced princess!"

Lisha finished saying that before bowing. Then small applause arose.

Even after Lisha's speech was over, applause that was unhurried but definitely loud was spreading in that place.

"Haa, I was nervous....."

After returning inside the castle from the audience balcony, Lisha tiredly let out a long sigh.

Queen Raffi and Prime Minister Nulph.

After lightly greeting them and other nobles who were gathering inside the castle, Lux and Lisha headed toward the Drag-Ride atelier.

"Thanks for your hard work Lisha-sama. It was splendid."

There was All-Dragon Battle tomorrow, so they had a toast not with wine but with tea.

After draining the cup in one breath, Lisha turned a dubious gaze at Lux.

"Say, it's fine if you talk more casually like usual you know? That excessively courteous tone made me feel itchy when hearing it....."

"I guess. Honestly I too prefer it like that."

Lisha was acting with decorum in her speech just now, but as expected she was still the same like usual.

"But, I'm happy. In your speech, Lisha-sam recognized me□□"

"-.....!? I, I was just saying what I thought. Praising someone with flattery isn't my style after all."

After speaking feverishly with bright red face, Lisha coughed to clear her throat and started walking.

"Ra, rather than that, I finished that thing you requested, but what do you think?"

After chasing after Lisha and entering inside, the Drag-Ride that Lux requested was put there.

".....Thank you very much. It's perfect."

He received the Sword Device from Lisha and lightly checked its feel.

With this, the minimum countermeasure against the matter that Lux was concerned about was in order.

It would be great if he could manage somehow with just this Drag-Ride but□□.

"Then, let's go back. To our inn□□"

"Yeah."

Lux returned to the inn that was the base of the selection members along with Lisha who was nodding in satisfaction.

After making little talk with the girls who were waiting for their return, they retired to bed in preparation for tomorrow.

Part 11

A few hours after Lux went to bed.

At dawn when the sun hadn't even risen, Lux woke up secretly and went out from the backdoor of the inn.

When he looked up at the sky of the capital that still had the lingering heat of the festival slightly remaining, the moon was still staying up.

"Please don't worry about the rest. Tomorrow, I will tell everyone the reason why Nii-san cannot appear in the All-Dragon Battle."

"Right, I'll leave it to you."

Lux had told Airi that she didn't need to see him off, but she forcefully came along. Lux smiled wryly to that while telling her so.

"Was there something concerning while I wasn't here?"

"No, nothing particular. Just in case I went to the castle at afternoon and asked about the detail regarding the decoy role mission. There was nothing strange whether about the information sent to us from our spy in Heiburg or about the content of the confirmation sent by the scout. But□□"

Airi sent an uneasy gaze to empty air, and then she stared at Lux with a perplexed expression.

".....The Drag-Knights stationed at northeast of the capital□□at the fortress along the rocky mountain and sea, it seems that they are being afflicted with a headache of unknown cause. There is no abnormality with their body, so it doesn't look like that it's poison or disease though."

"Headache.....?"

".....No, surely it's just their imagination. I'm sorry to detain Nii-san here."

Airi always remonstrated Lux saying to him "Doing reckless thing like this", but it was only at this kind of time that she was behaving meekly.

Most likely it must be because she was feeling strong uneasiness that Lux would head to the Abyss extermination mission after this.

"I will be fine. Rather than that□□I have one other thing to ask

other than informing the others but, is it okay?"

"I will listen if it's not a talk about Nii-san doing even more recklessness than this."

"I want you to carefully observe the Drag-Ride of Lisha-sama and others. Especially right after the Drag-Ride is summoned and equipped, pay attention whether there is anything unnatural happen or not."

".....What does that mean?"

Airi tilted her head. Lux averted his gaze just a bit.

"I also don't really know. But, there is something that concern me a bit."

"□□I understand. But, please don't expect too much okay?"

"Right. Then, Airi. Be careful."

"Nii-san too, be safe."

After exchanging only those words at the end, Lux started walking through the street of the sleeping capital.

At the same time, he took out a Sword Device hanging on his waist.

"□□Come, the symbol of power the winged dragon of crest. Obey my sword and take flight, Wyvern!"

Light flashed along with the passcode and a Drag-Ride was summoned.

Lux quickly wore that armor and made his Wyvern flew toward the sunrise sky.

Chapter 4: Fifth Artifact(Transforming Weapon) < Gigas(Giant Soldier) >

Part 1

Lux continued to fly in a straight line through the night sky of the dawn that was still dim.

The military's guard soldiers in the capital knew about the defense mission this time, but Lux was flying in high altitude so that he wouldn't get found by the Drag-Knights from other countries participating in the All-Dragon Battle.

After flying to the north like that for a few minutes, Lux came to see troops of Drag-Knight outside the royal capital's wall.

"So you finally come chore prince. Oops, right now you already the knight of her highness the princess huh. It's still a talk in the future if you can receive an official peerage but□□"

When Lux landed in front of the troops, a red-haired big man in front, one of the four great nobles Bugriser laughed heartily.

"Chore prince is fine. Rather than that, is there any change with the operation?"

When Lux asked seriously, Bugriser spread a large map for use of the operation and nodded.

At the abandoned village northwest from here, there was about a hundred Abyss that was thought to be hidden by the rebel army there.

Lux would lure them as a decoy, led them to the hidden fortress at the north where the new kingdom's main force was standing by,

and exterminated the Abysses with all-out attack. That was the broad sense of the operation this time.

Bugriser's Drag-Ride force was taking position at the north gate in order to intercept the Abysses that managed to slip away from that.

"There is no change to the plan. Currently, there is no change in the abandoned village that became Abyss's hangout, there is also no report about anything strange from the Drag-Knight scout patrolling around the capital. But□□"

"But, what?"

".....It seems that officer at the east fortress is saying that they are hearing strange rumbling sound sometimes. Well, I think that's just an absurd fear of theirs, but just in case we are being on guard."

"Understood. Then□□"

"Yeah, start the operation. Just like we first planned, the group of Drag-Knights of the combined forces arranged by the four great noble and the new kingdom military is standing by at the fortress. We are looking forward to your effort here."

".....Yes."

Lux nodded lightly, then he put his strength into the touch part inside the armor and made his Wyvern flew.

After increasing his altitude once more and confirmed the deserted village that was the target, he concentrated energy into the propulsion device at the wings on his back and accelerated the Drag-Ride further.

He heard that there was no inhabitant in the deserted village that was his target.

In the imperial capital recapture plan that the spy acquired, most likely there was no enemy Drag-Knight there except several ambush troops who were handling the horn flute.

But, if Lux's prediction was right on the money□□.

(.....No, it's useless even if I think about something I don't know. Today just concentrate at the current operation.)

Lux put more spirit and arrived at the deserted village.

That village he was overlooking from above was desolated as a matter of course. There was no sign of people, in exchange there was a small light in just one spot.

"....."

Lux strengthened his vigilance while going down to the village.

What leaked the light was from a cave inside the forest.

Lux walked between countless abandoned houses and when he got near the light, strange thing happened.

iiiiiiiiiiiiii-!

"Kuh.....!?"

His brain felt like it was directly thrown out of order. An intense strange sound reverberated.

It was the sound of horn flute that manipulated Abyss.

The moment Lux noticed it, countless light bullets were fired at Lux's feet.

He reflexively swung Scale Blade and deflected the light bullet of Breath Gun slantingly. □□ Then, he simultaneously reacted toward another moving presence and flew to midair.

An additional Cannon attack was fired at him along with a thunderous roar.

He deflected it with Scale Blade once more. Then after his gaze looked around, he caught sight of three Drag-Knights in his field of vision.

"As expected hero. A Drag-Knight who get ambushed usually will

try to counterattack right away or back away in panic but.....like this even the captain ain't your match."

A young man wearing a general purpose Drag-Ride that received Yggdrasil's seed and got remodeled□□<B-Blood Wyvern>, he was stroking his short bristling up forelock while leaking out a sigh mixed with a wry smile.

"Don't waste your time with stupid chatter Egnid. Take your position just as planned."

The one who rebuked that frivolous talk was a familiar girl wearing the same B-Blood Wyvern.

A girl with trait of wild long hair and dark brown skin, Saniya Lemiste.

She was a spy of Heiburg Republic who once infiltrated the Royal Officer Academy, betrayed Celis, and assaulted the academy along with Hayes.

Another girl wearing B-Blood Drake was standing by on her side. She was wearing a doodled round mask. Her true identity couldn't be peeked at.

"Kirly, check if there is any sign of enemy around. Is there other Drag-Knight coming?"

"Uuu..... Aa"

The masked girl called Kirly shook her head slightly in a display of answer no.

Saniya saw that and she seemed to understand. She turned toward Lux once more.

"Was it you guys who gathered the Abysses here?"

"Stop probing so transparently like that ruined prince. You yourself, what are you doing coming to this kind of deserted village by yourself while the All-Dragon Battle is going on? □□Haa?"

Saniya grinned fearlessly like that before she lifted up a horn flute dangling from her neck.

Instantly a shuddering chill ran through Lux's back and he reflexively flew to the sky behind him.

At the same time a silhouette of winged man assaulted from the darkness of the forest behind the three.

"This thing□□!"

A winged man type Abyss that possessed firm body, Gargoyle.

It was a formidable enemy that possessed high speed mobility in the air in addition of the capability to fire feather shaped light bullet.

Defeating it with the counter attack Critical Hit using Scale Blade would take some time because he needed to predict its inherent attack pattern.

Lux quickly readied his Breath Gun and laid down a barrage in front of the Gargoyle.

The claw tips of the Gargoyle who slipped through the barrage attacked. The moment Lux try to match the timing with Scale Blade□□one more Abyss, a Chimera assaulted from behind his Wyvern.

"Got you."

Saniya who laid the trap saw that and her lips loosened up into a grin□□but, right after that. The neck of the Chimera who should have taken Lux by surprise was snapped cleanly and the Abyss fell.

".....What-!?"

Lux pretended to intercept the attack from the front and evaded the claw while dealing the Critical Hit on the Chimera behind him. And then on the returning trip his sword dealt the second Critical Hit at the Gargoyle and smashed one of its hands.

He pretended to get caught in Abysses' coordination and reversely created the chance for Critical Hit.

Saniya and Egnid who saw that looked up to the sky with a strongly alert look.

"This is a harsh joke yeah.....? That guy, is he really human?"

"□□I see, just because he isn't using Bahamut, doesn't mean that it will be that easy."

Right after Egnid whispered in amazement, Saniya blew on her horn strongly once more.

Abysses were going out one after another from the cave. Lux who saw that took even more distance.

He defeated the Chimera with a bit of gambling on his part was in order to provoke Saniya and others.

In order to lure the Abyss swarm to the hidden fortress north of the capital, he had to make all the Abyss come out.

Therefore, Lux needed to make them think that just several Abyss wouldn't be enough to defeat him.

"I want to pay my debt back to you directly, but it can't be helped. Become Abyss's food like this!"

Right after Saniya yelled, countless Abysses that surged out from the cave started moving simultaneously.

After seeing that, Lux also turned around and flew away to escape.

"□□Fu, I'll tell you beforehand, your tactic is meaningless you know?"

A communication using Dragon Voice came from Saniya. Lux held his breath for only a moment.

"You must be planning to steal the control right at the moment

the effect of my horn run out using your own horn but□□it's pointless. Inside that swarm, there is a special Abyss called Grimoire. That guy will broadcast the command sent out by the horn to the surrounding area and make the Abysses to continue carrying out the same command. As long as that guy is alive, the effect of the horn won't be dispelled, and they also won't accept the command of other horn user.'

The reason how a large amount of Abysses could be controlled in the period of several days when the horn's effect would run out in a fixed time.

If they had that Abyss called Grimoire, certainly it was possible but□□there was also the possibility that Saniya's statement itself was a trap.

She might be making Lux to think that it was impossible to steal control using the horn so to lure him into challenging the Abysses with decisive battle of brief duration.

(In any case, I need to at least confirm it.)

Lux evaded the attack of the countless Abysses while buying time by intentionally taking detour in his escape route.

It was approximately ten minutes with his biological clock.

In the timing when it seemed like the effect of the first horn flute should be running out, Lux strongly blew into the horn he was carrying.

Strange noise ran through the area, but the movement of the Abysses in front of him didn't change.

'Now you get it that it's pointless? Then this time resolve yourself for sure and fight.'

(□□Good!)

After confirming the existence of the Abyss called Grimoire, Lux started escaping again.

Lux showed the fact that 'he was carrying a horn flute and tried blowing it' and made a reason for Saniya and others to chase after him.

If Lux identified the Grimoire and defeated it, it was possible that the swarm of Abyss could be stolen by him.

Therefore, Saniya's group should be moving to finish off Lux.

Like this it was possible to carry out the plan□□luring all the Abysses to the hidden fort.

"USHAAAAAaaA-!"

Right after Lux decided his action's objective, the swarm of Abyss attacked with even more vigor.

Lux slipped through the fierce attack of a great variety of Abysses using sword handling and control skill and continued to escape.

Because he continued to defend, he could only mix action to hold back the enemy from his end, each time he did that he risked danger and several times there was attack that grazed his Drag-Ride's frame.

"Kuh.....!"

His armor was gradually shaved, he also became unable to use weapon, his option to defend and dodge was getting limited.

He wasn't even allowed to blink inside the offense and defense to the utmost limit. That time when Lux almost ran out of breath, he finally saw the target forest□□the hidden fort where the interception force was standing by.

(.....Here they come!)

Right after Lux confirmed it, the Drag-Knights stationed inside the fortress were already readying their respective weapon simultaneously, and they pulled the trigger one after another.

The fired countless flashes roared and ran through the sky,

shaking the atmosphere and exploded.

It became the starting signal of the battle and the extermination operation began.

Part 2

After a total of two hours since the beginning of battle between an army of around a hundred Abyss and a mixed force at the hidden fort.

In the arena at the capital, the latter half of the All-Dragon Battle□□its first battle was already going to start.

A lot of spectator gathered in the audience seat and the venue was filled with even fiercer enthusiasm than the day before yesterday.

The three battles today would be against Heiburg Republic, Markafar Kingdom, and Wanheim Principality, in that order.

Inside the waiting room before the battle began, the selection members of the new kingdom with the exception of Lux was assembled.

"□□Because of that, Nii-san cannot appear in today's match."

When Airi talked about the detail of why Lux headed outside for the decoy mission, the selection members were shaken.

The imperial capital recapture plan was also a fearsome threat, but that duty of becoming a decoy in order to lure nearly a hundred Abysses alone was also reckless, some voices rose saying that they should go to help but□□,

"Nii-san's wish is so that everyone won't be exposed to danger and for us to win the All-Dragon Battle."

When Airi said that to everyone, before long everyone nodded in acceptance one by one.

"However this is a let-down. I thought that those guys who attacked us at the academy before this would surely come out here too but□□"

The names of Saniya and others weren't registered in the roster of their first battle against Heiburg.

"As expected, Saniya and others won't make appearance in the All-Dragon Battle. Currently I cannot see that they are preparing strong elite line-up that is even stronger than them, but....."

Celis too was whispering with a complicated face, perhaps because she was Saniya's former friend and hoped for a chance meeting.

"At any rate, we cannot let our guard down. Whether inside the match, or outside it too□□"

Philuffy also nodded shortly toward Krulcifer's words.

Then, for the last Lisha took a deep breath and made a smile.

"Then, we're going to obtain the greatest result before Lux return here! Let's go!"

Along with those words, the signal bell that informed the match starting time rang outside the venue.

The audiences' voice that was heated up due to the starting of the match could be heard until where they were.

Part 3

At the same time. Nearby the hidden fortress north of the capital, the large scale battle between the Abysses and the mixed troops was continuing.

After Lux led the swarm of Abyss and rushed into the forest, the military Drag-Knights who were tired of waiting started Cannon bombardment all at once and managed to exterminate a little under 20 percent of the enemy number.

After that was an all-out war between the two sides.

Thinking based on the pure battle strength, the advantage lied with the remaining around 80 Abysses.

Abyss's strength varied depending on the size and type, and their battle strength would greatly change depending on the combination too.

And then, even among the Drag-Knights of the new kingdom military, there were only 20, 30 percent officers who were used to fight Abyss.

But, they had the terrain advantage where they were able to take cover behind a solid fortress while attacking.

And then, because Lux had lured the swarm through a long distance, the Abysses that were coming at him all at once at the beginning were now scattered from each other, at present the new kingdom military was progressing the fight advantageously.

Lux entered inside the fortress and finished his decoy role for the moment. He reported to the commander of the mixed army, after that he followed someone who guided him and collapsed onto a bed in an underground room.

"As I thought, perhaps facing against a hundred was a bit reckless....."

Lux forgot because he was absorbed in the middle of fighting, but in actuality he only made it barely.

A great number of Abysses that received a command from a horn flute once had the tendency to attack in simple pattern.

Furthermore Lux was constantly fighting in high altitude. If he didn't limit his opponent to only flying type like that, there was no doubt that he would be done in already.

"Even so□□"

Lux laid down face up, staring at the ceiling while wiping the

sweat on his forehead with a towel.

The three Drag-Knights that included Saniya vanished since midway for some reason.

There was also the unlikely chance that they got dragged into the Abysses' attack, but he didn't understand the reason.

Even if by chance they were heading to the capital by themselves, they shouldn't be able to do anything with just the three of them.

(But, why is it I wonder? It feels like, we are overlooking something important□□)

The recoil from finally getting liberated from the extreme tension caused the fatigue to steal Lux's ability to think.

His consciousness was falling as though getting sucked into darkness.

Part 4

'Next, the second battle today. The match of New Kingdom Atismata versus Markafar Kingdom will begin. The participants of the first match, please come up on the ring!'

When the new kingdom's referee who was wearing a Drake prompted the participants, the representative from Markafar, a male Drag-Knight walked toward the arena first.

Markafar Kingdom had a wide territory, but perhaps because there was no Ruin existing in their territory, their Drag-Knight's nurturing wasn't that advanced.

Therefore, deciding that they would be able to take advantage in the pair battle using things like cooperation and so on, it was decided that in the first one-on-one battle Lisha would come out as the vanguard.

They obtained victory from the previous battle against Heiburg with two straight win, so they had some leeway for this battle.

"Now then, I'll win and create the momentum."

Lisha exited the waiting room and whispered that before she wore her Divine Drag-Ride, Tiamat.

When she entered the passage that connected to the ring's entrance, a figure clad in black robe ran in a straight line toward her.

"Lisha-sama!"

Airi who was similarly going out of the waiting room to look at the situation saw that and yelled reflexively.

"Hm.....? What's the matter little sister? Is there something?"

"Eh.....?"

There was nothing behind Lisha and Tiamat who turned around. No, Airi saw that the moment the black robed shadow touched Tiamat, it looked like it vanished as though melting into air.

"N, no, it's nothing..... It was just, my imagination."

".....Strange girl. If it's about Lux, then he is surely fine."

Lisha showed a smile before walking through the passage toward the venue.

But, Airi rushed through the stair toward the audience seat still with uneasy look.

'Both sides are in position, so the first match of the first battle, New Kingdom Atismata versus Markafar Kingdom shall begin. Battle, Start!'

Finally the match started.

The vanguard of Markafar Kingdom was a user of general purpose Drag-Ride Wyvern.

As long as there was no large incident, the victory of Lisha who

was a user of Divine Drag-Ride was unshakeable.

Lisha herself also sported a composed smile, and when she was about to press the opponent who was forced into a one-sided defensive battle□□,

".....Wha-!?"

Her expression instantly stiffened and agitation emerged on her face.

'Oh, is there some kind of trouble? The Drag-Ride of her highness Lizsharte is□□.....-!?'

The announcer Drag-Knight saw that and tilted his head. Lisha's Tiamat moved right after that.

The cannon that was charged until maximum was aimed at the audience seat that was in a completely different direction from the opponent, and the trigger was suddenly pulled.

DOUNN!

The cannon roared and a single beam of light ran thorough the air.

The defense Drag-Knight in front of the audience seat was shocked while blocking it with his strongest barrier.

Although he barely blocked the attack completely, scared voice rose from the audience seat behind him.

"Wa, wait-!? I'm not doing any□□!?"

In contrast with Lisha's bewildered words, Tiamat started charging the cannon's energy once more.

And then, it ignored the the Drag-Knight of Markafar Kingdom who was the opponent and once more aimed without the slightest deviation□□toward the audience seat that was fired at just now.

"□□Why!? Why is Tiamat's control is□□!? STOOOPPP.....!"

Lisha screamed. At the same time a scream rose from the whole venue.

The defense Drag-Knight was still unbalanced and was unable to deploy the next barrier.

The moment the cannon with the maximum output was fired once more toward the spectators behind, faint territory of light spread in front of Lisha.

"Divine Gate"

Celis's Lindwurm appeared before her eyes and deployed the maximum output barrier.

Celis was blown backward from blocking it, but the attack was somehow held back so that no damage to the surrounding occurred.

In addition, the armament of Krulcifer's Fafnir, the Freezing Cannon fired its freezing bullet and instantly froze Tiamat's cannon, both legs, and its back wings.

With that□□Tiamat was completely suppressed.

'Ho, how could this be!? The Drag-Ride of her highness Lizsharte suddenly rampaged. However, this□□'

Right after the commentary voice was raised,

"Be silent! This match is suspended because of the trouble's occurrence!"

The referee official landed down on the ring together with several Drag-Knights.

After that, Lisha's Tiamat was dispelled, and using a Drake's megaphone function, a formal judgment was handed down.

"It's deemed as an attack that intentionally aimed at the audience! The second match is counted as the loss of the new kingdom side due to rule breaking!"

".....!?"

Great commotion spread like ripple from the audience seat and people raised their voice.

"Is her highness still unable to handle Divine Drag-Ride that it rampaged at that kind of time?"

"The aimed audience seat, the VIPs from Wanheim Principality were sitting there right? Perhaps this will become international problem□□"

"Was she trying to kill them while pretending it as accident? Don't tell me, such thing....."

"□□That's wrong-!? I didn't do it! Such thing, absolutely□□!"

Krulcifer gently put her hand on the shoulder of Lisha who lost her self-control and shouted with trembling voice.

"Let it pass for now. No matter what happened, right now□□it's still"

Hearing those calm and serious words, Lisha lowered down her hand that was reaching to empty air.

That became the fall of the curtain of new kingdom's second battle.

Part 5

"Wha, what happened!? Why is fire from inside□□uwah!?"

"Re, retreat! They infiltrated until inside this fortress already!"

"Idiot! Retreat you say!? There are still thirty Abyss remaining there! No way we can run away to the capital at this rate!"

"You are the idiot! We cannot maintain the front line now that the formation has crumbled this far! At this rate it will be total annihilation!"

There was the loud bombing sound and the sound of Drag-Ride's propulsion device from above.

Furthermore the scream of the soldiers was mixed with the roar of the Abysses. Lux who only just woke up instantly recognized the graveness of the situation.

"□□□□"

He quickly took the pocket watch that he put on the stand beside the pillow and checked the time.

It was less than two hour since Lux's consciousness cut off.

He put strength into his lower feet and stood up and took a deep breath.

Strength returned to his body, but under this emergency situation, not even a single miss would be permitted.

He opened the door from inside with strong vigilance. When he tried to climb to the first floor from the stone underground room, he caught sight of a wounded person who seemed to roll down from the stair.

"Get a hold of yourself! What happened!?"

When Lux rushed to the person in panic and lifted up his body, the soldier made a suffering expression and talked with a hoarse voice.

"Re, retreat quickly! We were tricked. Our strategy was leaked to those guys right from the start! That's the only explanation. We fought the Abyss well at first, but those guys.....the rebel army that suddenly appeared from inside the fortress, attacked us□□"

".....The rebel army? How?"

In the imperial capital recapture plan that new kingdom's spy obtained, the rebel army that was the main force shouldn't attack yet according to the plan.

"I don't know. But there is only one thing that is clear. It's already impossible to defend this fortress anymore....."

"....."

Lux instinctually grasped the true situation.

The fact that Lux heard from the consuls that the rebel army's main force should be still standing by at a far away base. It was a trap from the enemy that they were caught in.

(However it's only natural.)

If a great number of Abyss were found to exist near the capital, anyone would have their attention diverted there.

In order to intercept a hundred Abyss in this hidden fortress, sixty percent of the full strength of new kingdom's army was invested here.

The situation was more pressing than expected.

"Please hide underground and retreat when there is chance. I'm going."

"Wa, wait! What are you planning to do!?"

"I'll lure away the remaining Abysses and the rebel army somehow for sure."

"Sto, stop acting rashly.....!? Such thing, is impossible!"

Ignoring the soldier who tried to stop him, Lux summoned his Wyvern.

He quickly equipped it and flew, got out of the fortress that was on fire, and headed to the sky in order to grasp the situation.

What he found there was the swarm of Abyss that was climbing over the fortress while destroying it and around two hundred rebel army behind them.

Until that point it was within Lux's expectation, but an unexpected face was among that army.

"Hoo, it has been a long time□□Lux. O little brother of my best friend Abel Arcadia."

Lux unconsciously held his breath after seeing the Drag-Knight inside the EX Wyvern flying in the front as though leading that army.

"You are.....if I remember right□□"

Ragreed Forus.

Five years ago he escaped from the new kingdom to Heiburg and colluded with the military division there. The supreme commander of the rebel army.

Once at Arcadia Empire, he was the best friend of Lux's older brother, the sixth imperial prince Abel, a man from a great noble family who was arranged to become a member of that Abel's imperial guard.

His personality and ideology were dyed with the same color as the old empire, he schemed to put a false accusation on Philuffy who was still a child at that time, to Lux he was an opponent that he had a tie with.

The subordinates behind him didn't move, perhaps because he gave instruction using Dragon Voice so that they didn't interfere.

"Strange fate really does exist. We who have relation as someone who similarly spend childhood time in the imperial court are now reunited like this as fellow enemy. I heard about your story from the strategist you know? Black Hero."

Ragreed sent a condescending gaze at Lux and grinned.

It seemed that he already heard about Black Hero and Bahamut from that Hayes.

"Since that time, when you became hindrance in my scheme, I got

a hunch even as a child. This guy is absolutely going to be an enemy against me."

He said with an annoyed tone before pointing his middle sized Blade toward Lux.

"But, in the end it's me who win at the end. Already the capital is going to certainly fall. I will succeed the will of the old empire ascending to the throne of this country as the new emperor."

"Pitiful person."

"Wha.....?"

Ragreed knitted his eyebrows slightly in respond to Lux's cold gaze toward him.

"Don't you understand that you are only being used as pawn by Heiburg's military division and that strategist? By the time you become the emperor only in name, you will be nothing more than a puppet that rule this country obeying what those guys ordered to you. Are you planning to become a clown who is only acting like a ruler because your eyes are blinded by greed?"

".....Fuh, fufufu. KukukukukukukuHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

When Lux pointed that out, Ragreed covered his face with his right hand while laughing loudly.

"You haven't changed at all huh. You, are you stupid or are you idiot or are you drunk?"

Ragreed made a vulgar grin on his mouth while tapping on his own head *tap tap* with his finger.

"A propped up figurehead? A clown who is only acting? So what? Isn't that just fine? I will be able to wield the authority of this country publicly as the emperor under the banner of Heiburg. I'll be able to toy with this country's fortune and foolish mass, and act as tyrannical as I pleased. After all I'm a modest and clever person. Qualification as emperor or recognition of other I don't have any

interest to anything like that from the start. It's all fine if I can just live easy and make you all submit."

"....."

Lux listened to that and let out a small sigh.

This man before his eyes, originally he was a man from a great noble family at the level that allowed him to come and go even inside the imperial court, but right now he looked uglier than any kind of Abyss.

"□□Only you, I absolutely won't allow to do that. "

Lux quietly took a breath, then he looked forward with a chilly gaze.

And then he took a stance with his Scale Blade positioned horizontally at the same height with his eyes. In respond to that, Ragreed also moved his EX Wyvern.

"Kukuku! You sure can talk huh ruined prince! □□Then, I'll make you beg!"

He flew drawing a sharp curve while saying that and unleashed a slash from his rush toward Lux.

It was an attack that made use of EX Wyvern's mobility, but that was all there was to it.

Lux saw it and then reacted. He intercepted using Critical Hit by means of Scale Blade.

With that the opponent's attack power should be reflected back into a single point and destroyed that weapon and armor but□□.

BACHIIN!

"-.....!?"

Instantly a dazzling light burst at the point of contact and both sides were blown backward.

The Critical Hit should have been executed perfectly, but the EX Wyvern was unharmed.

No, rather than that□□.

(The Drag-Ride's movement, at the midway.....it changed?)

There wasn't just a powerful repelling force just now, right before Lux blocked the attack, the enemy's movement changed subtly.

It happened in the timing that absolutely couldn't be changed if the Drag-Ride was only controlled normally.

"□□What's up, is that everything you got? You seriously think you can protect this country when you cannot even beat me alone?"

Lux's Critical Hit ended in failure wasn't because Ragreed's movement was exceptionally excellent.

Certainly he had the skill that was near the level of High Class Drag-Knight, but that was all.

The Drag-Ride he was wearing had the appearance of a simple EX Wyvern but□□it contained some kind of secret.

"You aren't going to use Bahamut against the like of me? Then I'll teach you something good. About right now a bigger calamity is approaching the new kingdom. A tremendous force that is even more dangerous than that Ragnarok."

"What.....!?"

Ragreed's fearless grin didn't show any sign of falsehood.

No, leaving that aside Lux had a clue about it.

If his worst imagination that normally should be absolutely impossible was right on the mark□□.

"□□Howling Howl!"

Instantly Lux emitted shockwave from his armor's head aiming at

Ragreed in front of him.

Right after the EX Wyvern was sent flying before his eyes, Lux moved backward and took a wide distance.

Lux took position at the shadow of a large rock behind him, then he quickly dispelled his Wyvern.

"Fuh! Finally you got motivated huh? Then□□I'm going to go at full power too!"

Ragreed who saw that also pulled back temporarily before pulling the horn flute on his neck toward his mouth.

Along with the dissonant chord of the horn, the command toward the Grimoire was rewritten and the remaining thirty Abysses stopped attacking the fortress. All of them simultaneously changed direction toward Lux. Furthermore with that as the signal, the rebel army's Drag-Knights who were colored in grey also directed their weapon's aim toward Lux.

The current Lux could only use Bahamut for the time limit of twelve minutes.

Using it for more than that would cause the Drag-Ride to be forcefully dispelled and became unusable.

The remaining thirty-odd Abysses and approximately two hundred Drag-Knights of the rebel army.

The greatest threat currently approaching the royal capital.

There was already no other way except making a gamble here in order to stop all those threats.

Lux quickly muttered the passcode and equipped a jet black armor.

"Kuku, finally showing up huh Black Hero! User of the violent dragon Bahamut! Now, show me! Just what can you do with that few remaining time and strength!"

Ragreed yelled and lifted his Blade high toward the sky.

Instantly, the Abysses and Drag-Knights he was leading simultaneously started attacking.

Part 6

The All-Dragon Battle waiting room for the new kingdom was dead silent as though cold water had been poured there.

The second battle before this ended as the loss of the new kingdom because they were regarded as violating the rule intentionally. In addition Celis and Krulcifer who barged into the arena also lost their qualification to participate today and their side was forced into a disadvantage.

Lisha who was the perpetrator of the incident was taken away for a hearing by the investigator who came from the palace.

Of course it was the fact that she was under suspicion, but because she was also in the position as the new kingdom's princess, there was also the intention to shelter her personage as quickly as possible.

With this, for the last battle against Wanheim Principality, the only Divine Drag-Ride user who could participate was Philuffy, but there was an even more serious problem for the new kingdom.

Lisha's cannon shot was directed toward the audience seat where the VIPs of Wanheim Principality were placed.

Currently the All-Dragon Battle was still ongoing, so the matter was put on hold, but the other side was holding doubt that the incident was intentional.

In the case that after the All-Dragon Battle was over Wanheim Principality denounced the new kingdom with the suspicion of assassination, it was unavoidable that the new kingdom's position would worsen, in the worst case□□it might even become the spark of war against Wanheim Principality.

And it would happen by the hand of none other than Lisha who said that she would fight for the sake of the new kingdom□□.

"Even with the investigation of the cause, for the time being we have to prepare against the next match. The third match against Wanheim Principality will surely have a different atmosphere than before. □□Are you good to go, Philuffy Aingram?"

"It's fine. Even in case someone blow a horn flute, I can endure it for a little while."

Putting out Philuffy under this emergency situation was a kind of gamble.

The opponent wasn't Heiburg Republic, but if they felt like doing something, there was the possibility they would use the horn flute to control Philuffy who possessed the trait and ability of Abyss to cause damage.

An especially strict inspection toward the personal belonging of Heiburg people should be carried out, but they still couldn't let down their guard.

And then□□,

"Controlling Drag-Ride.....if there is someone who set up Lisha-sama, then as expected, is it that girl?"

Airi spoke out what she was thinking since some time ago with a low voice.

The girl who possessed the nickname of the Empire's Assassin Blade, Kirihome Yoruka.

The Divine Raiment of her Yato no Kami□□Spell Code, was the ability to control other person's Drag-Ride which was activated by touching the Drag-Ride.

Lisha and others had witnessed it, and the other selection members had also heard about it from them.

"Even if that is actually the case, we will have to search for her

and apprehend her. There is almost no chance that we can make it until the next match begin but□□we can only do it."

Saying that, Celis and Krulcifer stood up.

"There is no time. I and Celis-senpai will split up and search for her. So□□Airi-chan. Can we leave the command of the team to you?"

".....I understand."

Airi accepted with a nervous voice.

"Yes. I'm going to equip my Drake constantly, so if there is something I will contact you two."

"I'll leave it to you, then"

The two said just that and left the waiting room to search for the culprit.

If Kirihome Yoruka was aiming for Lux, there was a possibility that she was lurking nearby.

Thinking so, Krulcifer headed outside. Then she saw the figure of the guard soldiers around the practice ground rushing around in panic.

"What's the matter? Perhaps something troubling has happened?"

Krulcifer who felt the abnormality called out to a young officer.

"Ah....., no, there is nothing! Ple, please, you can continue to watch the match....."

For a moment Krulcifer thought whether this was the government putting the incident that Lisha caused just now in order, but the situation was strange no matter how she looked.

"I am a Drag-Knight who belong to Syvalles, the raid force of the academy of Cross Field. This time I am here as a participant of the All-Dragon Battle, but I have finished my turn. If there is a problem,

can I please at least be informed about the detail?"

Krulcifer presented her student ID and told the soldier so.

Originally speaking, Krulcifer who was an oversea student from Ymir couldn't participate in a mission with high danger level, so she lied only in that point.

"Is, is that so!? N, no.....there is only a bit of mistaken information circulating between the defense force for the area around the capital.....! We are gathering information to confirm it while being on guard just in case□□"

"Can you tell me specifically what is happening?"

Krulcifer who heard of that detail questioned the soldier further.

The soldier was sweating nervously while forming his words.

"Currently, a giant enemy force from the northeast of the royal capital□□there is high chance that this is a mistaken information, but it mentioned that the fifth Ruin that existed in Heiburg itself is moving□□"

".....-!?"

The complexion of Krulcifer who heard that sentence changed.

She already knew that behind the scene of this All-Dragon Battle, Heiburg's imperial capital recapture plan was in motion.

And then, there was the existence of Hayes who was called as Lord(Creator) at the third Ruin the Ark.

If they were similarly related with the attack this time□□.

"Northeast of the capital is it? I will also go to take a look at the situation."

"Ple, please! I'm in hurry to evacuate the resident at the northeast area so□□"

"Oi! What are you doing there! Quickly go!"

The young officer was scolded by a man who seemed to be his superior and he hurriedly dashed away.

After parting with the man, Krulcifer summoned Fafnir and equipped it.

She took a high altitude where she could have bird-eye view of the capital and flew to the northeast.

With Fafnir that possessed the greatest level of mobility, she would be able to make a round trip until outside the capital in just a few minutes.

After continuing to fly with the maximum output of the booster in her back wings, before long the sight of the surrounding became obstructed.

"Mist□□? Even though the capital had clear weather just now.....?"

Krulcifer decelerated Fafnir and hovered midair.

She should be right outside the wall of the capital, but it was as though the scenery below was completely unseen.

But, a heavy moving sound that the thick mist couldn't erase could be heard from right nearby.

"This is□□!?"

The moment Krulcifer whispered, a thunderous roar exploded.

Countless flashes flew piercing the white mist obstructing her sight.

One of it exploded and burst in front of Fafnir, sending it flying backward for a few dozen mel.

"Kuh.....!?"

She escaped danger because of the protection of the special armament of automatic defense—the Auto Shield that activated just before it hit her. The power of the attack was tremendous to a degree that it wouldn't be strange that she would get serious damage without the protection.

The enemy itself blew away the mist due to the explosion blast of the cannon attack it fired. Because of that the true shape of the enemy became clear.

"Wha.....!?"

The moment she was able to look the full picture of the enemy, Krulcifer's spine froze.

It was gigantic.

A giant body that far surpassed a large type Abyss Golem that Krulcifer once fought personally.

It had two legs that could be mistaken as a mountain of steel. On top of those legs was a large waist two size bigger than the royal castle and an inverted triangle of a chest, at the left and right were protruding shoulders where each looked like a large type battleship. On the surface of those shoulders, countless cannon muzzles could be seen.

The head part that resembled rhinoceros beetle had a neck that slightly extended to the front, looking down on the royal capital with robotic eyes.

Its thin long arms had countless streaks running on it. At the end of each of those arms was a hand with five fingers. Several houses were already pinned under them.

It modeled the shape of an armored soldier, the gigantic fortress of steel that should be emplaced at Heiburg.

The fifth Ruin 'Gigas' that Krulcifer once saw in a book was moving as it was.

"They got us. Who will ever thought that they were hiding this

kind of trump card□□"

The Ark where Poseidon existed left its movement route until now by the action of Hayes and her group and its whereabouts became unknown.

In that case, it wouldn't be strange if they also had done something to the Ruin of Heiburg where Yggdrasil□□the Ragnarok that Lux and others had defeated probably came from.

But, although the fifth Ruin was liberated by that, for the Ruin itself to come invading like this was just too much.

'Warning – we demand for you to dispel your armor as well as surrendering, Xfer-sama.'

"Eh□□?"

Suddenly, a cold apathetic voice without any inflection in it could be heard through Dragon Voice.

Krulcifer didn't see any other Drag-Ride around her.

Krulcifer noticed a moment later that the voice came from the Gigas before her.

'Identifier name – Gear Leader of the fifth Ruin El Fajura will break the prohibition in causing unnecessary harm to you□□no'

That girl who was most likely similarly an Automaton like La Cruche of the Ark suddenly completely stopped her words that were said with no gap in between.

'Unfortunately just now there was notification from my Lord to immediately□□exterminate you she said.'

"-.....!?"

The change in attitude of the Automaton that also happened at the Ark.

Krulcifer recalled the shadow of Hayes from that situation.

'Transitioning to attack preparedness□□firing'

At the same time with that voice, innumerable countless cannon muzzles extended from the Gigas's protruding shoulders.

Right after that, thunderous roar and explosive blast that completely filled the surrounding swept over above the sky of the royal capital.

Part 7

"What in the world....."

Noct who was wearing Drake inside the arena's waiting room heard the Dragon Voice from Krulcifer and she unconsciously groaned.

The third battle of the All-Dragon Battle's latter half, the battle against Wanheim Principality was entering into the last third battle.

Philuffy won at the first battle the individual match, and the second battle the pair match ended in defeat just now.

With both sides having one win each, the third match would begin. But before it could start, the state of high alert was invoked in the royal capital and it was discussed to temporarily suspend the All-Dragon Battle.

But, only Greifer who was the Wanheim Principality's participant for the third match was firmly maintaining his attitude that wished for the match to continue. He stayed rooted on the arena ring.

"I'll wait just for five more minutes yeah? Come fight already, new kingdom."

Greifer showed a fearless grin. He was already clad in his Divine Drag-Ride Cuelebre waiting for the signal of start of the battle in the ring.

"I'll say this beforehand. For the time being there is also this need for keeping up appearance so I come out into this match, but if you

guys don't take responsibility for firing a cannon at our princess, then it doesn't matter what is the result of this match, I'm gonna locate the criminal myself. I'll catch anyone suspicious one by one□□and then interrogate them with this hand."

Greifer's eye glint that was tinged with killing intent caused the spectators to get goosebumps.

□□Right now, there was no Drag-Knight of the new kingdom who could stop Greifer who was in a frenzy.

Almost all the Drag-Knights were already departing in order to defend against the force attacking from both sides of the royal capital.

".....Will he make it in time?"

Airi gazed at that ring. And then when she lifted up her face, Noct's Drake suddenly showed a reaction of receiving transmission of Dragon Voice.

'Can you hear me□□Airi, Noct?'

When she came to hear the familiar voice of her big brother, Airi's lips burst into a relieved smile.

But, her expression immediately returned into her usual calm look and she brought her face closer to the Drake before throwing out her voice.

"You're late! Just what have you been doing Nii-san! This side is in really grave trouble! A giant Ruin is attacking from the northeast! Lisha-sama's Tiamat rampaged, and the people of Wanheim Principality was also aimed at□□what should we do about this!?"

'Yeah, I also got set up in my side. The hidden fortress already fell, and I'm getting chased by the rebel army and Abyss swarm.'

"-.....!? And, what is Nii-san planning to do?"

'I want you to tell everyone what I'm going to say after this.'

Lux told Airi the 'strategy' in the shadow of the arena that was enveloped with uneasy commotion.

Part 8

"The prime minister of Wanheim Principality is saying that they will bring up the incident this matter resolutely. They won't accept the explanation that there is defect in the Drag-Ride. He told us to hand over the princess to be judged by their law."

"There is no way we can do something like that! Even the All-Dragon Battle isn't over yet you know!? Tell him that we will listen to what he has to say again later!"

On the other hand, inside the castle. Inside the wide conference room, the angry yell of the consuls flew around.

The extermination mission of the Abyss swarm failed due to the surprise attack of the rebel army led by Ragreed, and enemy army was marching on from the northwest.

Their aim was just as the name 'imperial capital recapture plan' suggested, this very royal capital itself.

It wouldn't even take tens of minutes until all that force arrived in this place.

"But, there is also the fact that just the other day a guard of the royal capital attacked a selection member of Wanheim Principality. In addition of the continuing bad blood since the era of the old empire. At this rate they surely won't listen to us urging them to go home to their country without even giving out any proof or the perpetrator."

".....The princess also really has done something outrageous. Even though that bunch has been troublesome since the past□□"

"Please calm down. The clarification of the incident is not finished yet. Only after that everything can□□"

Lamenting voices continued to rise from the consuls hearing the

reports coming in one after another.

Lisha was hanging her head down while listening to those voices of despondency and indignation from the floor immediately below.

After that match, still in her suit without even changing, she had been absentminded as though her soul had left her.

Why it had turned out like this?

Even though she should have done the best she could.

Even though for the sake of this country, while knowing that she was still immature□□she thought of trying to become the real thing, and yet.

She didn't have any such power, she betrayed everyone's expectation, and invited the greatest predicament.

"It's like.....I'm a criminal."

Inside the hidden room for royalty's personal use that was prepared underground.

She was isolated so that she wouldn't get aimed by the people of Wanheim Principality that she enraged. Lisha made a powerless bitter smile toward her situation.

Her feeling was the same like five years ago when she was kidnapped by the old empire and became hostage, before she was then abandoned by her father the great hero.

She couldn't do anything. She was toyed by the happening with nothing she could do with her own strength and lost everything.

"Why..... Why it became like this again? Was I mistaken? From the start, someone like me□□"

When she couldn't endure anymore and let out a complaint, footsteps came from in front of her.

When Lisha came back to herself and quickly lifted up her face,

the room's door was opened.

Over there, the Drag-Knights of the rebel army whose uniform was painted grey were standing with their weapon at ready.

"We are going to have you come along okay, your highness. Together with us."

"....."

Lisha could only look down with a pale expression.

Just like that day in the past.

Part 9

"How long you're planning to continue running huh, Black Hero? Aren't you going to stop me?"

Lux who was wearing a jet black Drag-Ride was being chased by Ragreed who was driving EX Wyvern.

After exchanging blow several times above the hidden fortress, Lux who got a part of his shoulder armor broken escaped in a straight line toward the direction of the capital.

But, he was chased by the strengthened general purpose Drag-Ride EX Wyvern, taking along the majority of the rebel army being led by Ragreed and also the Abyss that already numbered more than thirty.

"Kukuku, I heard from the strategist you know? The time you can fight in that Bahamut is limited. That's why you are trying to lure us into a place where you can get the military's reinforcement and bring this into advantageous situation aren't you?"

"....."

"But, that's already impossible! Try looking in front of you!"

That sight entered the eyes of Lux whose field of vision was

continuously filled by the scenery flowing backward in high speed.

Bugriser's unit that should be preparing for interception in front of the wall already disappeared from there.

".....-!? I see, just as I thought....."

Lux held his breath. At the same time he saw at far ahead and guessed the reason why the military had abandoned their position.

The information that the fifth Ruin Gigas that existed at Heiburg couldn't be seen anymore.

His worst prediction came true.

The fifth Ruin, Gigas.

The strange looking weapon that was filled with evil omen to accomplish destruction and atrocity was standing as though looking down on the capital's townscape.

(But why? Why is no report came that it has arrived until this near!? If the Ruin is moving, the Drag-Knights at the east of the capital should have seen it and yet□□)

Gigas that should be visible even from the distance of a few kl had approached until this near. Why didn't anyone notice? (TN: kl is kilometer and mel is meter)

'.....The Drag-Knights stationed at northeast of the capital□□at the fortress along the rocky mountain and sea, it seems that they are being afflicted with a headache of unknown cause. There is no abnormality with their body, so it doesn't look like that it's poison or disease though.'

Suddenly that sentence that Airi told him was replayed inside his mind.

Instantly, a prickling pain as though behind his eyes was burned ran through Lux's head. A scene that felt like it wasn't his memory entered into his head.

"□□I thought that you will understand if it's you though, my younger brother."(TN: Fugil use the word 'kentei' to call Lux, it's usually a polite reference to another person's younger brother, but here he used it to call his own younger brother. Translated literally it means wise younger brother)

A vaguely nostalgic refined noise□□the voice of his eldest brother Fugil entered his ear.

Red night sky that was illuminated by blazing flame.

In front of the castle of Arcadia Empire where whirling up fire sparks were falling down, that thing was existing.

(This place□□what in the world? Is this the memory of that day, five years ago?)

Lux could affirm that this scene had happened almost without a doubt, but a violent uncomfortable feeling bewildered Lux.

Lux didn't have any memory at all that he had exchanged this kind of conversation with Fugil.

".....We cannot do such thing. There is no way something like this can be repeated because of the convenience of the like of me, the like of us!"

The Lux inside the memory raised his voice, in respond Fugil smiled fearlessly.

A figure wearing a strange-looking Drag-Ride he had never even seen before with gigantic size even bigger than the castle at the back was there.

"Is that so? You should have noticed already from a long time ago. You who were born inside that corrupted palace, living while stuck in dilemma between the royal family and the people, if it's you then you should have noticed the structural defect of this country□□no, this world and its people."

Fugil spoke admonishingly, also as though in conclusion.

"See, you who are purer than anyone, because you want to avert your eyes from that fact really much, you could only take on the ideal of a king that is more righteous than anyone and took refuge inside that dream. □□But Lux, you should wake up already from the dream. We should accomplish it, we ought to carry out our true mission as hero."

"You're wrong! There is absolutely no such thing! I.....what I really wished for is□□"

"□□Fine. Then you can come at me."

The Drag-Ride that was so gigantic its full figure couldn't even be grasped from nearby was starting up with a roaring sound that shook the earth.

"You won't lose or anything. You cannot even stand on the same stage where I fight for eternity. Therefore, there is no victory of defeat right from the start. I will take the burden of your karma. Because I am□□after all."

"-.....!?"

Lux who was wearing Bahamut in Over Limit state flew toward that giant dragon.

Instantly, the scenery distorted fiercely like jelly, enveloped by light, and vanished indistinctly.

Seven Ruins. The simultaneous activation of the Artifacts(Transforming Weapons).

The transforming Drag-Ride of the end at the beginning□□Uro.....boros.

"-.....!?"

Lux returned to his senses and returned his consciousness to the sight before his eyes.

Perhaps it was a happening of only one or two seconds, because the Gigas at far away and Ragreed before him were in Lux's sight

the same like before.

"Now you get it? It's over for you all. You fell into our strategist-sama's scheme. Your body's shouldn't be in the condition to use that Bahamut for some more minutes right?"

"So your aim for luring me is that?"

Lux gazed at Ragreed with chilly eyes and voice.

Lux was lured at the north hidden fortress, the new kingdom's army was made to fall apart and the clincher was how he kept talking provocatively at Lux. All of those were the groundwork to make this situation.

Hayes was on guard the most against Bahamut. She guided the event into a situation where Lux had to use it and drastically stole its operation time limit.

No matter what their side tried to do, they already got cornered into a helpless situation with nothing that could be done. Hayes's scheme tried to obtain a certain victory like that.

All of Lux's bad premonition was right on the mark no, the event was transitioning into a situation that was even worse than he imagined.

Just like when Lux tried to destroy the empire in the past.

But the present was different from the past, he now had a lot of comrades he could trust.

That was why he resolved himself. That right here right now once again they would save the new kingdom with their power.

"Ragreed Forus. You've resolved yourself right?"

".....What?"

Ragreed frowned toward Lux's calm declaration.

Completely different from in the past when they were in the

imperial court, Lux's face there was hiding determination inside.

"You put your bet on Heiburg and that strategist Hayes. As for me□□I'll bet on everyone who put their trust on me, and drive away all of you."

Right after that, the jet black Drag-Ride Lux was wearing released a vortex of shockwave using Howling Howl.

"Kuh, □futile act!"

But, Ragreed held his ground and pulled his Cannon's trigger aiming at Lux's silhouette.

The jet black armor was smashed and countless fragments danced in the air. □□But,

"This is.....?"

Ragreed was bewildered because the opponent purposefully didn't deploy barrier and there was strangely no resistance from the hit.

When he searched for Lux's silhouette that he lost sight of, a calm voice entered his ear from beside a nearby bell tower.

"□□Manifest, violent dragon who devour the flesh and blood of the gods. Sever the sky of black cloud, Bahamut!"

"What-!?"

Ragreed raised a shocked voice hearing the muttered passcode.

Right after that, light particles converged in high speed and formed shape. A jet black Drag-Ride was summoned once more.

The aerodynamically shaped Mithrildyte(Phantasmal Gem Steel) clad in dragon's might manifested and emitted an ominous luster as though to display that absolute power hidden inside the frame.

"How-!? How can there be two Bahamut!?"

"□□Connect – On"

The moment Lux muttered coldly, the Drag-Ride unfolded from inside and transformed into an armor that covered Lux's body.

"What I was wearing while you were chasing after me was a mere Wyvern. It only had its armor parts adjusted and painted black."

"Kuh.....! Such thing! Impossible!?"

Yes, the true identity of the thing Lux requested at Lisha in the capital was that.

It was another Drag-Ride that was different from his original Wyvern that was tuned for defense. It was a Wyvern with its armor and barrier scraped down as low as possible to make it light weight type that stressed in speed.

By skillfully using it properly, Ragreed's eyes were tricked.

"Bu, bu, how can you do something like that!? In the first place you should be only preparing for Abyss extermination! You shouldn't know anything about our attack! And yet why□□guah!"

Lux glided and took the position overhead Ragreed. He ignored the question and slashed at the EX Wyvern.

Ragreed almost crashed into the bell tower from the impact he got, yet right before he crashed, the surface of his armor shined and his trajectory was altered, preventing him from crashing.

"It wasn't like I understand what will happen. But□□I'm just planning beforehand, to at least prepare a plan that can react against anything that could happen."

The answer for Ragreed's question was exceedingly simple.

From the start Lux was already harboring doubt toward the existence of the deserted village where a great number of Abyss was staying, and also the very fact that the new kingdom was able to obtain the information about it beforehand.

The enemy's strategist Hayes also knew well about the information regarding the specification of Over Limit.

In that case□□naturally Lux put into consideration the possibility that Hayes would put into motion a plan to exhaust him, and then Lux requested Lisha as the countermeasure against that.

"I don't have time right now. □□But, I too still have something I want to confirm."

Lux put in energy into his great sword Chaos Brand and let out a slash with the shortest movement he could toward the unbalanced Ragreed.

He aimed at the part that was shining on the armor's surface just now and hit it hard.

'U, aa.....!'

crackle crackle-!

 After a small burst of electricity, light that looked like shining powder spilled out from the surface and a faint voice could be heard.

"So that's the true shape of it? The thing that strengthened your Drag-Ride and assisted the control was□□"

"Chih!?"

Ragreed clicked his tongue hearing Lux pointing it out.

Lux was uncertain of the full detail of it, but most likely it was because of someone's cooperation□□or perhaps an old technology sleeping inside the Ruin that was applied on the EX Wyvern.

Thinking about how Hayes used the fifth Ruin to invade the royal capital, it wasn't hard to imagine.

"Guah!?"

Lux struck down Ragreed to the ground with the returning movement of his sword.

After looking at the EX Wyvern crashing at the vicinity outside the arena, Lux landed down on the arena ring where the spectators were already starting to evacuate.

He landed facing Greifer who was standing there clad in Divine Drag-Ride Cuelebre.

Cheers and commotion rose up seeing the intrusion of the unidentified Drag-Ride.

'Wha, what could this be!? Suddenly, a mysterious Drag-Knight landed down at the position of new kingdom's side!'

The military officer clad in Drake who had the commentator role also raised such surprised voice.

Because the distance from the audience seat until the center of the ring was quite far, surely almost everyone didn't notice that it was Lux.

"Oh. To think that there will be a superb performance where you come here for me huh."

At the opposite side Greifer seemed to notice that it was Lux. His mouth loosened and made a grin.

"Can you accept fighting me, right here right now?"

"Got no objection here, I don't intend to retract my previous statement yeah? Regardless of this match's result, we gonna capture the princess of you guys, then make her spit out the location of the culprit no matter what. I'm not gonna allow what happened ten years ago repeat again, when the old empire charged a crime on my father and killed him."

Lux was also concerned about Lisha, but right now he had to stop this person first.

Lux stayed still on the designated position and ran his gaze around. Right outside the ring, the military officer who had the referee role was looking at Lux's Bahamut with a bewildered face.

It was natural that he got bewildered when an unfamiliar Drag-Ride suddenly entered the ring.

Reluctantly, Lux took a small breath in order to reveal his identity, but then,

"I met him before so I remember. That guy is certainly one of new kingdom's representatives. If you get it then give the starting signal quickly. It's none other than me, the opponent□□who recognize it like that yeah?"

"□□Ye, yes-!?"

Threatened by Greifer, the referee hurriedly moved to the direction of the audience seat and peeked at the complexion of the management committee members. And then, perhaps they gave him agreeing signal because the referee immediately raised his voice.

"Then, the last battle that is today's third battle□□New Kingdom Atismata versus Wanheim Principality, the third match will begin!"

The duel between a mysterious Drag-Knight who flew down from the sky against the leader of Wanheim Principality's representatives, Greifer.

Inside the royal capital that was already imposing the state of high alert, at the arena that was enveloped with bizarre atmosphere where the spectators were starting to evacuate, the last battle of All-Dragon Battle started.

'Battle, Start!'

The instant the referee's voice resounded, Greifer's Cuelebre shot off.

Its back wings spewed out air explosively, closing the distance instantly while unleashing a slash at the same time.

The moment Lux blocked it with his great sword, a Howling Howl struck at him from above his defense.

"Kuh.....!"

Bahamut's barrier blocked the impact and it was forced to back off. From above the barrier, the peculiar slash of Tail Blade paid it no mind and struck down with the momentum of a surging wave.

It was like a raging wind. It was a style of offensive tactic that forcefully robbed the opponent from any choice by constantly taking the initiative, cornering the enemy, and continued to attack without pause.

That rain of attack that seemed sloppy from a glance increased in precision and power each time it was unleashed, cornering the enemy with certainty.

The enemy was without exaggeration a strong person. If Lux wanted to defeat this man in this current situation there was only one way.

"Reload on Fire"

"Photon Dive"

The moment their sword crossed, Lux's Bahamut gushed out red light to display its Divine Raiment's activation.

As though responding to that, Greifer also quickly invoked his Divine Raiment.

The Divine Raiment that compressed the energy and phenomenon of the first five second, then activating and doubling it at the later five seconds, Reload on Fire.

In contrast, Cuelebre's Photon Dive made it so that for a few second when the ability was activated, all the enemy's attack wouldn't affect it and got deflected, so to speak it was a Divine Raiment that transformed the Drag-Ride into invincible state.

Lux was evading Cuelebre's slashes while carving many slashes using the blade of the great sword he wielded on the surface of the enemy's armor.

But, his attack that was unleashed with the usual speed naturally didn't get through.

At the end even the tip of his blade was deflected and it exposed a small opening on him instead.

"I got you-!"

Greifer's blade struck along with a sharp step-in.

Although Lux withdrew from the range just for an instant faster, the surface of his armor got a faint scratch.

Even so Lux didn't show any agitation and he gazed at Greifer with expression that showed no opening.

"That's quite something. So this is your true strength? But in the end it's pointless yeah? Cuelebre's Photon Dive won't get affected by any kind of attack. You absolutely□□.....-!?"

At that time when Greifer grinned proudly, something strange occurred.

PASHI-!

A sharp impact sound burst, and together with it countless red slash lines instantly ran through Cuelebre's armor.

The impact energy from the Force Core that Bahamut's Chaos Brand was filled with. The energy came into effect with delayed time difference and attacked Cuelebre right after the effect of Photon Dive cut off.

"Whattt.....!?"

"The Photon Dive give you roughly seven seconds of invincibility. Aiming at the moment it was turned off, I delayed the moment the impact of the sword I wielded reached you by using Reload on Fire's ability."

Lux accelerated at the same time he coldly told that, and struck Cuelebre's torso with a full power attack where Lux put all his weight on it.

"Gu, ah.....!"

The sword was swung to the end as though it was also shooting through the generated barrier altogether, sending Greifer flying to far distance away.

Greifer crashed on the arena's wall and the impact made his deployed barrier to be dispelled.

With that based on the rule the match was decided.

"The, the representative of Wanheim Principality has his barrier dispelled because of the damage and become unable to fight further! The winner of the third match as well as the third battle is, New Kingdom Atismata!"

"OOOOOOH.....!"

The sudden intrusion of the black Drag-Knight and that dramatic conclusion caused the spectators of the new kingdom who was still remaining in the middle of evacuation to raise a stir.

Lux listened to that vaguely as though from far away while gazing at Greifer who was knocked onto the wall.

(□□That was dangerous.)

Lux won his dangerous gamble and he stroke down his chest in relieve inside his heart.

The fight would undoubtedly become prolonged if he didn't settle the match in this opening phase. If the match dragged on, it would be unclear how the outcome would turn out to be.

And then □□Lux was able to win this battle merely because of the decisive difference of information both sides possessed.

Lux knew about the trait and Divine Raiment that Greifer's Divine Drag-Ride Cuelebre possessed from directly crossing sword against him, while Greifer didn't know anything about Lux's Bahamut.

This was a victory that he wouldn't be able to obtain without Greifer's reckless personality and that accidental battle, but it was fine like that for now.

First was to stop the movement of Greifer and Wanheim Principality who were in an explosive state that could rupture anytime.

The moment the first objective was cleared, Lux sent Dragon Voice through Noct's Drake that was limited toward several members.

'I'm sorry for saying various unreasonable thing. Everyone, can I ask you to fight following the strategy I talked just now?'

When Lux asked that question with faint apologetic feeling in his tone, everyone's voice immediately responded back.

'Yes, I'll start.'(Krulcifer)

'Uh huh. Understood.'(Philuffy)

'Acknowledged, Lux.'(Celis)

'□□Yes. Lux-san, please take care.' (Noct)

"Thank you□□everyone."

Right after that, Bahamut that Lux was driving flew with explosive momentum.

And then from above the sky, he swooped down in high speed aiming toward a spot of the castle's rear entrance that he was told about.

Part 10

"Just what should we do.....!?"

"I, is there anyone who know about the mechanism of the fifth Ruin!? At this rate, the capital will□□"

The officer Drag-Knights who protected the new kingdom were surrounding Gigas using Wyvern in order to attack it, yet they were at a loss helplessly.

They had tried roughly every kind of attack, but the steel fortress existing before their eye wasn't affected at all. They were unable to even hold it back.

In this situation where it wasn't even a fight, the officers almost fell into despair. It was then they could hear it.

"Looking tedious huh□□you ignorant uncivilized bunch of riffraff."

"Wha-.....!?"

Suddenly, a voice came from the head part of Gigas. Stir ran through the flying officers of the new kingdom.

The strategist Hayes who colluded with Heiburg Empire was wearing a huge silver grey armor, standing above Gigas's head.

"You, you bastard□□are you the mastermind who is controlling this Ruin!?"

"□□Nope, you got it wrong, I'm the savior. I'll stand at the top to rule this world in the place of you incompetent bunches. Rejoice you livestock, your honored owner finally came after through a long time you know?"

"Bunch of nonsense.....! Fire-!"

Several officers aimed at Hayes and pulled their Cannon trigger simultaneously.

The concentrated cannon fire from dozens of Wyvern continued and caused a violent explosion blast.

□□But,

"You can cut it already. I got the gist."

Hayes raised a calm voice while being in the middle of a maelstrom of bombing that even a Divine Drag-ride with its barrier deployed couldn't possibly stay unharmed.

"I, it's not.....working!? No, there is no way□□"

In front of Hayes was a layer of round shaped light wall□□.

Not the slightest attack reached beyond that partition.

Rather than calling it a barrier, it was as though space itself was cut off.

"□□I'm late with the introduction huh. The name of my Divine Drag-Ride is <Nidhogg>. Its Divine Raiment's name is□□<Astral Line(Severer)>"

Hayes displayed a wicked smile and the armor's arm readied a sword with peculiar shape.

The sword had a long blade that was several times the length of normal Blade. At its handle's opposite side there was also the same blade lengthening, a uniquely shaped blade□□two-bladed sword.

When Hayes who was wearing Nidhogg carelessly swung down the atypically shaped sword that was tinged with the light of its Divine Raiment,

"Be, be careful! Deploy your barrier in maximum output□□!"

The world was split into two, along with the officers' armor and the maximum output barrier they deployed.

Part 11

"Where are you all taking me.....?"

Lisha who was suppressed by the rebel army that was already infiltrating inside the castle without even any time to pull out her Sword Device was taken outside the castle without anyone even noticing.

When Lisha asked that behind the castle surrounded by trees, a man of the rebel army grinned widely.

"We want to have you take the arbitration role in order to not increase the number of unnecessary sacrifice in this war, that was what the strategist said. I'm told that there is a secret on her highness's body that can achieve that□□"

".....-!?"

Lisha suddenly groaned with an expression as though her chest had been stabbed.

She noticed Hayes's scheme from that one sentence.

The rebel army that was planning to suppress the new kingdom shouldn't be thinking about peace or anything.

In other word, what Hayes was desiring from Lisha was to persuade the people□□no, her aim was to make known that the princess Lisha was a human at the rebel army's side.

They would expose the brand of old empire that was engraved on her body at the past, revealed that her true identity was that of a traitor, lowering the unifying force of the new kingdom and Lisha, dropping the situation into chaos, and made it easier to take over the country. That was their intention.

"Don't screw around..... You think you all can keep using me like that however many times you like.....!?"

"Oh? I heard that your highness is a person who dislike needless conflict and kind to the people though?"

The moment the man of rebel army jerked his chin to a far away direction, Lisha saw 'that'.

"-□□That's!?"

At far distance away, through the townscape of the royal capital, she could see the figure of Gigas.

And then, the sight of the flash emitted by the Drag-Ride at the top of its head cutting apart the atmosphere, dividing the new kingdom military and the town into parts□□.

"Wha....."

plop, Lisha fell down on the spot in astonishment.

"Do you understand now? This is the last work that the powerless you can do for the sake of this country. If your highness follow the intention of our strategist, there won't be anymore attack than this you know?"

"The, there is no way I can do anything like that! Something like me handing over this country to the like of you is□□"

Although it was so that the people wouldn't be harmed, but doing things like betraying their trust and delivering them to another ruler was just.....

"Is there any meaning for you to act brave like that? Someone like you who disappointed them in the match before this?"

"□□!?"

Lisha's feeling was shaken when she recalled it.

Perhaps a human who was feeling hesitation even in their own power had no qualification to lead the people.

Even so.

"Even so, that guy told me! That he will fight together with me□□!"

Right after Lisha closed her eyes and yelled, an impact struck the ground like a thunderbolt.

"□□Eh?"

The moment she opened her eyes in surprise, the armors of rebel army's Drag-Knights were smashed apart altogether.

"Gu, AaA.....!"

The rebel army groaned and collapsed. And then the true identity

of the one who did it became clear.

The one who came down was a Drag-Knight clad in jet black armor.

It was the silhouette of the Black Hero that she saw five years ago in that day.

".....You□□"

"I'm sorry that I'm late, Lisha-sama."

When Lisha muttered, Lux smiled calmly and handed over the Sword Device of Tiamat that he recovered from the hand of the rebel army.

The hand of Lisha who accepted it shook, she stumbled and squatted down on the spot.

"I, I don't□□I don't have the face to look at you....."

Lisha hung her head down while speaking with a disappearing voice.

"Even though I promised to protect this country together with you.....I made Tiamat rampaged in All-Dragon Battle, and degraded that oath myself."

"That was Hayes's doing. I had grasped how she did it too. I will do something about it no matter what, that's why□□"

"I know! But, even if we make that clear, everyone might not believe it anymore. The people's trust on me might not return! And most of all.....it's vexing!"

Lisha lifted her face. Her eyes were wet.

"It's vexing that because of my fault, even you got made fun of and treated like villain! You who fought and risked your life for this new kingdom's sake more than anyone, I want to make everyone recognize it, that was what I wanted, and yet....."

At that time Lux noticed for the first time.

Lisha talked about making Lux her knight was because she wanted to save Lux who couldn't be recognized by the people because he was once a part of the old empire, who was collared as a criminal even now, and who was still ridiculed by a part of the country because of that.

She wanted to make him into an existence that was recognized by all this country's people together as her knight in this new kingdom.

The inside of his chest became warm that she was thinking that much for him.

Lux softly caressed the head of such Lisha with his hand.

"Lu.....x?"

"Thank you very much. For thinking about me all this time. But, I'm fine. Even without this country and all its people recognizing me, I can fight with only your recognition."

He offered his hand in front of Lisha once more with a gentle voice.

"That's why, please fight together with me. Not for the sake of anyone else, but for the sake of your own oath. I need Lisha-sama's strength. In order to save this country one more time, this time for sure□□"

"....."

Lisha who heard those words slowly took a breath, and lifted up her face.

And then she grasped the handle of her Sword Device with a trembling hand, and pulled it out from its sheath as though resolving herself.

"□□Awaken, the progenitor of beginnings. O monarch dragon of the gods that form an army on your own. Tiamat!"

Light particles converged in high speed. Immediately after that, the crimson great dragon that was summoned behind split into countless parts and transformed into an armor that covered Lisha's whole body.

After blinking lightly and gazed to the front, over there was the figure of Gigas approaching the castle while treading on the buildings on its way.

".....It's a mysterious feeling. Even though just now it felt really terrifying to wear a Drag-Ride, but now it feels really reassuring."

"That is the true Lisha-sama, surely."

"□□Let's go, Lux. We got to beat up the bunches doing as they please in my country after all."

Lux nodded at Lisha's self-confident smile.

'□□Nii-san. Everyone is in position. We are starting.'

At the same time Airi's voice came through the medium of the Dragon Voice of Noct's Drake.

Lux sent his voice through the Dragon Voice that was already connected to Krulcifer, Philuffy, and Celis.

"I'm counting on you□□everyone!"

Lux said that while at the same time he flew his Bahamut together with Lisha.

The operation against Gigas that continued to match in a straight line toward the castle finally began.

Part 12

'□□Warning'

It was a voice that sounded robotic and tinged with hollow presence.

An amplified voice that was different from Dragon Voice which was a communication ability between fellow Drag-Rides was emitted from the head part of the Gigas.

Approximately a hundred Drag-Knights of the new kingdom military were heading to intercept as well as defending against Gigas. Half of them was shot down by Gigas's bombardment and Hayes's Nidhogg, and the remaining half was withdrawing with the injured among them.

The capital's northeast district that was starting to be evacuated was already crushed underfoot and fell into a half-destroyed state. The cause of that, the Gigas was moving toward the castle in high speed.

'The battle is decided already. New kingdom military as well as the queen and her subordinates in this place are to swiftly display their will to surrender by prostrating. By doing that any further attack will stop and we will grant repose that is our rule to everyone.'

Hayes proclaimed that above the people who were running about trying to escape.

The new kingdom that had its force scattered and also its defense line broken through had no more method to oppose it.

And then, this advice was a trap.

Heiburg would place the rebel army that was supporting the old empire as the head and indirectly ruled over the new kingdom.

Furthermore, it would be shown to the VIP from many countries who were coming for All-Dragon Battle with the aim of putting a check on them too.

The consuls inside the chaotic castle couldn't find any breakthrough solution against this advice.

While the scream and confused voice of the people could be heard from the streets of the capital,

'Unfortunately, your lords didn't give their answer□□. Therefore, We'll resume attacking!'

Right after that cold proclamation, the Gigas moved.

The countless cannon muzzles growing from those giant shoulders aimed downward, it was then an abnormality occurred.

GAKIiiI-!

The thin long arms growing from Gigas's shoulders with countless joint in it. One of those arms that looked like a spire suddenly slanted, the Gigas's posture crumbled and pitched forward.

Right after that, the countless light bullets fired from those shoulders and the chest part rained down on greenery area right under it where people had already finished evacuating.

'What.....!?'

Hayes who was near the head part of Gigas noticed the cause of that and she frowned.

Looking closer, Philuffy who was wearing Typhoon entangled several wires of Pile Anchor on one of Gigas's arms, pulled downward and broke its balance.

'Foolish act.....! El Fajura! Crush her!'

After Hayes gave that instruction to the Automaton, the Gigas pulled its other gigantic arm and aimed at Philuffy□□but, that instant when its attention was diverted to below, the left arm Gigas was lifting up was struck with light bullet.

'This is□□don't tell me!?'

"Starlight Zero"

That was the compressed light bullet fired from Celis's Lindwurm. When Hayes noticed it was already too late.

The attack fired from the special armament of wide range

destruction sent flying the left arm of Gigas. The countless cannon muzzles sticking out from both its shoulders were smashed. That overwhelming offensive power was pruned temporarily.

Hayes cursed receiving that fierce wave of explosive blast.

"Pointless struggle..... Enough, ignore them and crush the castle underfoot."

Hearing Hayes's instruction, Gigas's feet that were like a mountain moved. It marched while causing fierce rumble on the ground.

The many citizens at the area around the castle until the arena saw that and screamed. Running about trying to escape.

But, when those feet arrived until nearby the castle wall surrounding the palace, a single Drag-Ride stood in its way.

"Kneel under my name! Suppressor□□!"

Lisha wearing Tiamat unsheathed her Sword Device and pointed at Gigas.

Instantly, a gravity field was formed on a spot of that gigantic right leg and its movement became dull.

Seeing that, Hayes looked down on Lisha from above the Gigas's head.

"So you come to incorrigibly expose your shame again huh, princess-sama!"

"Shut up this wannabe strategist! I'll make you payback your debt to this country and me!"

"Hah! Don't get carried away, you substitute lowly princess! What can you son of a bitch do!? You think that this Gigas can be stopped by something like that?"

Just as Hayes ridiculing words said, the burden from the gravity field didn't do anything and the Gigas resumed its march.

It was as though it was proclaiming that something like the resistance of Lisha alone was pointless.

But the next moment, when the Gigas was about to take one more step,

"□□Reload on Fire."

DOOooOONN!

One of Gigas's legs smashed the stone pavement and the ground and it stepped through until below the ground.

".....What-!?"

Because of the gravity pressure that was reinforced until several times from before, that leg was buried deeply into the ground. Lux wearing Bahamut was looking down calmly on it from midair.

Tiamat's Divine Raiment, the gravity field that in a glance looked like it wasn't working at all went through compression strengthening of Bahamut's Reload on Fire. The moment Gigas tried to ignore it and took a step forward, the power of the gravity field became several times the original and attacked.

"Bu, but why, why is there a hollow below this kind of place!? What in the world□□!?"

"Should I teach you, wannabe strategist? You see, the underground around there has a large scale tunnel that was dug up at the era of the old empire. It was something created more than a hundred years ago, that's why only very few know about it."

".....-!?"

Hayes also guessed the fact from listening Lisha explaining proudly.

The people in the past were building a city above while knowing that there was a tunnel below was because it was constructed to be able to endure great burden and weight.

But, because of Lux's Reload on Fore, Suppressor's gravity pressure was reinforced several times over, and aiming at the moment the super heavy Gigas step there, a pitfall was prepared to make the foot step through the ground.

But even with that the best it could do was sealing one leg of Gigas, but at this moment a completely advantageous situation was created.

"Chih!"

Hayes clicked her tongue. In order for the Gigas to pull out its buried leg, it was going to put both its hand on the ground, it was then two more people moved.

"□□Ei"

Philuffy fired Pile Anchor from every part of Typhoon and restrained a part of the thin long arm.

At the same time she drove her Drag-Ride with her Booster at maximum output and ran through the street. By towing the arm once more, Gigas's balance almost crumbled.

"You think I'm going to let you do the same thing over and over!"

When Hayes's voice resounded, Gigas raised its remaining left arm and aimed to crush Typhoon.

"Obstructing with that□□is not permitted."

But, the lance attack of Celis's flying Lindwurm aimed at it instead.

She aimed at the seam of the countless joints and made a thrust attack with maximum electricity discharge.

Terrific sparks spread through the whole left arm that looked like a spire, and its movement stopped for just a moment.

"Pointless! Gigas's arm won't be stopped with only a single Drag-Ride!"

When Gigas's left arm was swung down a moment later, Philuffy already released the binding of Pile Anchor, setting free the right arm and escaped.

"You keep making trifling nuisance□□.....!?"

Right after Hayes cursed, she noticed it and held her breath.

The right arm of Gigas that Philuffy was towing was frozen.

Ten-odd spots of countless existing joints were frozen and its movement was almost completely sealed.

At the sky above a slight distance away from there, Krulcifer wearing Fafnir and readying her Freezing Cannon was hovering.

During the ten second Hayes's attention was diverted when Celis stopped the attack of Gigas's left arm, Krulcifer fired several freezing shots at each joint with terrifying precision and sealed that right arm.

'They got us Lord with this we cannot make movement.'

An Automaton's voice came from inside Gigas toward Hayes who was wearing Nidhogg.

Hayes too finally understood everything with that.

"□□□□"

Her greatest fighting strength the Gigas had its invasion completely stopped with the chain of cooperation from five Divine Drag-Rides.

The smashed cannon muzzles jutting out from its whole body were being replaced, but there was some distance until the castle.

Right after that, three people other than Lisha and Lux headed toward the castle and began to move respectively.

'Rescinding the frozen state to make both arms usable and the buried leg taken out□□more than ten minutes are necessary until

Gigas recover to a flawless state.'

The main body of El Fajura who was controlling Gigas from the control room area sent voice to Hayes telling her that.

Many people and nobles outside the arena who were evacuating saw that sight and made a stir.

"Fuu....."

Lux let out a relieved sigh seeing that his plan went well for the time being.

He had Sharis and Tillfur to investigate the structure of the fifth Ruin, Gigas.

Because Gigas's shape was greatly different from other Ruins, he had them looked for the shortest route toward its deepest part.

Of course, there was only a faint chance for them to discover the route nicely, even so they had no choice but to do it.

'Operation success Nii-san. What's left is as planned□□please be very careful.'

Airi who was watching over the situation from the spectator seat of the arena sent her voice through Noct's Drake.

They had only finished stopping Gigas from moving, the situation still continued to be one where they couldn't let their guard down.

As for reacting against various other dangers that were occurring at the same time□□he could only leave it to other people.

'Right.'

Lux returned a small voice and looked down below him.

And then, Gigas was starting to make a strange vibration sound that might be for melting the arm's frozen spots. Lux and Lisha landed together on the shoulder of that Gigas.

The two giant shoulders at both sides of the head were each like a battleship's deck, fulfilling the role as spacious foothold that was several times larger.

There, Hayes wearing Nidhogg and one other girl's silhouette were standing.

"Lisha-sama."

".....I know. I'll take on that fiendish strategist. You fulfill your duty as the former imperial prince, against that so called loyal subject who set us up."

Lisha said only that and made her Tiamat glided, advancing toward Hayes.

And then, Lisha turned her crimson pupils that were sharp like sword point straight to Hayes and she pointed her Sword Device forward.

"I won't be able to ask you after beating you up so I'll ask ahead. What is your true identity and your objective? Is it authority, money□□or else some kind of honor or something?"

".....What's the point asking me that? A substitute princess like you who was placed only as the replacement of someone, after knowing the answer what are you going to do?"

Hayes jested in respond to that question and answered so with a ridiculing grin.

"I'm asking exactly because I'm a substitute."

But, it was as though Lisha wasn't shaken up or hesitating at all, she told Hayes calmly.

"I somehow understand about you. Surely you and me are completely opposite□□or perhaps mutually similar people."

"□□What?"

Lisha continued pushing her words toward the frowning Hayes.

"I was toyed by fate, each time the chair I sat on changed, and I became unable to understand what is the true me. I was once abandoned by my father the great man and decided to betray the new kingdom, so I wondered whether someone like me have the qualification to sit on the seat of princess. But you are the opposite. Because you cannot proof your true position and identity to anyone, you're purposefully trying to display your privilege, all that ability and treasure of yours."

"....."

"Controlling Ragnarok and dragging out this Ruin here are also like that. By doing this, you want to prove that you are an existence with something, a human race with great power that far surpassed the people of this world. You are someone in the position that is driven with the obsession that you must continuously prove that."

Lisha asserted that and gazed at Hayes with a sharp glint of eye.

"□□That's why I'm asking you just as you wished! Like this, who the hell are you!? You got any complain huh, this stupid idiot!"

Instantly, Hayes's countenance that until now was sporting a smile that looked like it was pasted on there changed.

She strongly gritted her teeth, and then Nidhogg that she wore readied its weapon.

"Fine then. I'll tell you my true identity, when I crush this country and it's time to carry out your execution!"

Hayes's Nidhogg soared and she brandished the two-bladed sword that had blade extending from both ends of its handle.

Crimson and grey light crossed and the battle began.

Part 13

A battle between fellow Divine Drag-Ride had began on the right shoulder of Gigas.

At the opposite side, a girl was standing on the deck.

"□□I've been waiting, Aruji-sama."

The black clothed girl displayed a smile that was filled with deep affection and bowed elegantly.

The last servant who swore with that body of the old empire's restoration, the Empire's Assassin Blade, Kirihome Yoruka.

"It seems various things happened below isn't it? That princess also said it, something about someone's Drag-Ride getting manipulated□□. Aruji-sama, are you suspecting me of that?"

"□□No, that wasn't your doing."

Lux shook his head toward Yoruka's question and declared so.

The Divine Drag-Ride she controlled, Yato no Kami.

Its Divine Raiment, Spell Code. Certainly there was time when Lux suspected her because of that ability.

But, there was something he noticed from talking with Yoruka several times.

This girl's principle wouldn't trifle with that kind of petty trick.

What happened was most likely□□Hayes's scheme.

It was a trap to provoke and incite Wanheim Principality that had grudge against the old empire, making them aim at the members of the new kingdom that included Lux, and at the same time made Lux and others to doubt Yoruka as the perpetrator to make them fought each other.

"But if that's the case, this is a bit strange isn't it? Then why does Aruji-sama appear in front of this me? Isn't Aruji-sama's first priority is to beat this Gigas first, which you can do by ignoring this insignificant battle against me?"

Yoruka tilted her head slightly and asked in wonder.

"That□□I cannot do."

Lux answered with a calm face while slowly closing the distance between them.

"With you the strongest one in this place waiting here, I won't be able to pass even if I avoid you, besides I believe that surely there is a reason for me to fight you."

"....."

Yoruka didn't reply anything t Lux who muttered that calmly. She was only deepening her smile.

Without defeating Yoruka, Lux wouldn't be able to break through the path until Gigas's deepest part.

But, Lux himself had his own thinking that differed from that objective.

Other might laugh if they heard his reason but□□he wanted to save Yoruka.

She was controlled by the old empire, exchanged contract with the emperor, and even now she adhered to it, tied by that curse.

"□□Erode, the serpentine dragon of massacre that is the personification of evil omen. Exercise the authority of unworshipped god, Yato no Kami."

Right after Lux spoke, Yoruka also drew out her Sword Device and summoned Yato no Kami.

The Drag-Ride of darkness color was clad with a blade's majesty, worthy of its name. It immediately split into countless parts and transformed into an armor that covered Yoruka's body.

"I thank you, Aruji-sama. Then, it will be a discourtesy if I make you wait for more than this."

Yoruka declared with a smile and took a stance with her katana type Blade.

At the same time, Lux also held aloft his Chaos Brand.

"Here I come, Yoruka."

"Yes."

At the same time with that voice, Lux's Bahamut kicked on the shoulder of Gigas that became the floor and soared.

The remaining expenditure time of Bahamut's operation limit was approximately nine minutes.

If Lux's assumption wasn't mistaken, he would consume seven minutes here.

The curtain of that mortal combat had been cut off and fallen down.

Part 14

At the other side, inside the arena that was noisy from witnessing the Drag-Knights stopping the invasion of Gigas, something unusual occurred.

Greifer who crashed onto the outside wall and stopped moving now woke up, furthermore the selection members of Wanheim Pricipality were each wearing their Drag-Ride and came down at the center of the ring.

"Wha, what are you doing, everyone of Wanheim Principality? The last match of All-Dragon Battle was over already, right now a state of high alert is being imposed! Please hurry and evacuate from□□.....-!?"

The new kingdom's officer that acted as the commentator called out nervously, but he stopped.

He sensed the unusual hostility from the Drag-Knights of the selection members there.

"It's unfortunate with the match, but it's your side's victory. But,

the case where a member of ours was attacked in the inn, and the case where our country's princess almost got assassinated at the match before this. Regarding these two attacks toward our country, we don't recognize the explanation that your country is giving us."

A girl wearing a Wyrn declared that with a cold voice and glared at the new kingdom's officer.

"This is not a threat or revenge. It's your side who made a move first. We were told by his excellence to find out the perpetrator of this incident."

"Tha, that is□□!?"

The new kingdom's government office as well as the new kingdom's military weren't in the condition that could take action because they were dealing with the dangers that were occurring simultaneously at present, but that reasoning wouldn't get through them.

"Well, that's how it is."

The leader of selection members Greifer declared while readying his Sword Device.

"The duke-sama of our country is already in angered state. Just like I said before, we received an order regardless of the result of this All-Dragon Battle. We are ordered to subdue the consuls of your country and make them take responsibility. And so□□first we are going to question you yeah."

The female officer of the new kingdom who got the point of a Blade pointed toward her spontaneously faltered, it was at that moment□□,

".....-!?"

BANG! A sharp sound piercing the air accompanied a streak of flash running through the air.

That light bullet of cold air was fired aiming at the Blade. Greifer pulled his sword just before the bullet hit and he dodged.

The light bullet struck the stone ring and the spot that was hit instantly froze.

"Can you please wait a little for the investigation of the incident□□even if you all are told that, it doesn't look like you all are in a state that will listen isn't it?"

Along with that voice, Krulcifer clad in Fafnir was coming down to the center of the ring.

"Hee, it's really interesting that even outsider like you are coming out, but it's better to stop now yeah?"

"I agree with that. I too don't want to do a pointless fight after all. Because right now there is enemy nearby□□what's more it's closer than you think."

Krulcifer calmly brushed up her hair and spoke smoothly.

Her gaze was taking in what was far behind Greifer, at the figure of Gigas.

Lux clinched victory at the last match of All-Dragon Battle, but the attack he hit Greifer with was shallow.

There was a chance that Wanheim Principality that was suspecting the new kingdom as the mastermind of this time's assassination attempt incident would directly act using force.

Surely the rebel army and Hayes's subordinates would take advantage of such commotion and chaos.

Therefore, Lux gave instruction for Krulcifer to stop that.

"It's unfortunate but we cannot do that. Even me have a fight that I cannot pull back from. If you are also someone from military family then you get it right? That's what this is."

But, Greifer didn't budge for even an inch and he readied his special armament the Tail Blade.

In respond Krulcifer also reacted by directing her usual composed

eyes toward the opponent.

"I understand it. I too cannot possibly lose here after he entrusted this place to me."

"That's a nice resolve, too bad that you are a woman."

"You are saying a strange thing just now. When the battle begin, it's the woman who is more resolved you know?"

Right after Krulcifer replied like that, Cuelebre suddenly moved.

It approached with a powerful speed that even eyes couldn't follow like a single bullet. At that moment Krulcifer also carried out her act of interception.

Greifer made a slash following a peculiar trajectory as though drawing a spiral using his Tail Blade that transformed into whip shape.

Krulcifer ignored that using her automatic defense from Fafnir's Auto Shield while pulling the trigger of her Freezing Cannon in short range. The freezing bullet sniped at the right arm's wrist that was holding the sword.

Tactic and attack that were both filled with certain victory crossed in that place and light scattered.

Part 15

"What is going on!? What should we do about that Ruin Gigas!? What happened with the mixed army stationed at the hidden fortress!?"

On the other hand, a tense war conference was opened in the conference room of the castle and many angry yell and scream flew around.

The Drag-Knights that the new kingdom military and the four great nobles rounded up.

Almost all of them six hundred Drag-Knights fell into Hayes's scheme and got scattered, more than half were annihilated and the rest was forced to retreat.

Furthermore the Drag-Knights stationed at the northeast for monitoring the area and the scouts altogether failed to notice the Gigas, making it late to deal with it. The dispersed Drag-Knights were the crushed quickly and they took flight.

The radical and large change in situation that was too much made the second and third defense plan that were prepared to be of no use and they fell into a kind of confused state.

"Confirm the situation! What happen with the force there!? How many Drag-Knights remaining that can fight!?"

"Half the number of Lord Dist's force is rescuing the people and defending the surrounding block you say!? If they have that kind of free time then tell them instead to go suppress the enemy! What are they going to do if the enemy reaches until the castle! The safety of her majesty is number one!"

The remaining senior statesmen raised their voice roughly while gasping for breath.

Amidst that, suddenly a voice came from beside the room.

"How ugly. So any authority figure is all the same when they are cornered."

"Sto, stop it! This room is□□guhah!?"

DON! Two palace guards were blown through the conference room's door from the shockwave of Howling Howl.

"□□Wha, what's going on-!?"

After the panicked consuls yelled, three Drag-Knights were standing at the other side of the broken door.

At the front was a girl with trait of brown skin wearing B-blood Wyvern□□Saniya.

And then right behind her was a man wearing B-blood Wyrms, Egnid and a masked girl wearing B-blood Drake, Kirly. Both of them were accompanying Saniya.

Hayes's direct subordinate□□the three Drag-Knights who were called Cerberus.

"Yo, you bastard, who are□□huh!?"

The moment one of the consuls raised his voice, several shots of light and sound of destruction reverberated inside the conference room, blowing away several desk, flower vase, and document.

The shooting of Breath Gun from Saniya's B-blood Wyvern threatened everyone there.

"All of you don't have any right to ask anything. Just answer of question truthfully."

Saniya directed a cold gaze at the speechless consuls and quickly told them.

"Where are you guys hiding the Gran Force you brought from Cross Field's academy?"

"Wha.....what are you talking about?"

Several consuls paled at Saniya's question and replied like that.

Saniya who saw that pointed her gun muzzle on a consul's head while smiling.

"I see, a splendid resolve. If perhaps you really don't know about it, then I'll ask someone who definitely know about it. □□Where is the queen?"

"Tha, that's□□!?"

When one of the consuls was faltering to speak, the fingers of the B-blood Wyvern Saniya was controlling touched the trigger of the Breath Gun.

But at that instant, a territory of faint light spread inside the conference room and the space wavered.

"□□!?"

Saniya reflexively leaped behind, right after that a girl clad in armor appeared along with seven colored halo.

In the past when Saniya infiltrated as spy into the academy, she idolized this girl like a big sister□□a daughter of one of the four great nobles, Celistia Ralgris, it was her figure.

"Celistia.....! Why are you here!?"

"To payback my debt□□no, to take responsibility."

Celis told while directing a sharp eye glint toward the bewildered Saniya.

"In the past, I didn't know anything about you even though I was trying to understand you. That's why□□I will settle this right now."

It was a reunion with the girl who betrayed her.

However, different from the past, now even when Saniya looked at that figure, there was no more hesitation inside Celis.

Celis's consciousness was sharpened pointedly like a spear's tip, her body was clad in an aloof atmosphere.

Celis's stance that was polished to the utmost limit from the accumulation of diligent constant training had not even the slightest opening.

"Fuh....."

Saniya who should know about Celis's strength from staying closest to her more than anyone smiled without any fear.

"Is it the instigation from that ruined prince? That's just fine..... I'll show you! The power I obtained, I'll show it to bunches of noble like you bastards who went through lukewarm way of life all this

time!"

Saniya drove her B-blood Wyvern and slashed at Celis with swift action.

When Celis blocked that with her Lightning Lance, Egnid and Kyril started giving cover fire.

Part 16

".....Hmph. We too finally finished reorganizing our formation here huh, that damn Lux, he made me went through this kind of trouble."

On the other side, in front of the street that connected to the castle and the arena, the supreme commander of rebel army Ragreed and his subordinates were assembled.

There were a total of fifty Drag-Knights, their armor was dyed grey that symbolized the old empire.

Furthermore at the sky above them were around thirty flying type Abysses that possessed wings.

"That guy preparing a fake Bahamut was a miscalculation, but it's convenient if he is fighting Gigas. Like that there won't be any trouble or enemy□□standing in our way to obtain this castle."

Ragreed stifled his laugh and lifted the Blade of his EX Wyvern high.

"Here we go! From here we are storming into the castle. We are taking back the glory of Arcadia Empire from the hand of those thieves this time for sure!"

‘OOOOOOOO!’ His subordinates the rebel army hailed back in response with a war cry.

The path to the castle had been evacuated with the people taken to the shelter. There were already no more guards remaining there.

If Ragreed made the remaining Abysses and the rebel army force charge, the castle would fall easily.

"Finally..... Finally I can become this country's emperor!"

Ragreed raised a voice that was hoarse from excitement. He flew his EX Wyvern and right after that□□*GAUNN!* There was a sound slicing the air of something sharply sweeping sideways.

'Enemy Drag-Ride's attack confirmed□□defensive movement activated.'

El Fajura's robotic voice resounded and a barrier was forcefully deployed.

The barrier deflected three Daggers approaching from the front, but a pile at the tip of a wire that was fired with a delay split to up and down like a snake's jaw, snapping into the shoulder of the EX Wyvern.

".....Nuuh!?"

When Ragreed who was surprised by the surprise attack turned his gaze downward, a huge purple Drag-Ride was there.

Philuffy who was driving Divine Drag-Ride Typhoon appeared to intercept Ragreed.

'Enemy sign confirmed warning two Drag-Rides that are Divine Drag-Ride Typhoon as well as a Drake appeared.'

".....Kuh!"

Ragreed grasped the situation from what El Fajura pointed out, but Philuffy didn't give him time to react.

With high speed she rolled back the wire she fired from her left arm's armor and pulled the EX Wyvern until in front of her.

At the same time, she made the stout right arm of her Drag-Ride that was already in a stance to hum in energy, and that right straight struck.

"Gu, Aa!"

It was a certain kill attack from an enforced counter after he was drawn in by the Pile Anchor.

Although the Drag-Ride was a strengthened general purpose type EX Wyvern, that strength easily broke through the barrier and it should have broke the armor and the Force Core□□but,

'Defensive coating as well trajectory change success.'

Ragreed's Ex Wyvern that got hit by that was sent flying far away backward, but it corrected its posture midair and landed.

The moment Philuffy's attack landed, light powders shined brightly on the surface of the EX Wyvern.

That was exactly the power of the clone of Automata(El Fajura) that was converted into the form of countless miniscule machines and fused with the EX Wyvern.

"What's that? It was really solid than normal."

Philuffy tilted her head while taking some distance. At the same time Noct who was hiding at the back wearing Drake quickly called out.

"Yes. Please be careful Philuffy-san. The surface of that Drag-Ride is being specially coated by something. The mechanism is unclear, but most likely it's from an ancient technology from Ruin."

"Right. It's fine. That side cannot fly anymore, after all."

But, Philuffy replied indifferently with her usual expressionless look.

As though to prove her words, the soaring back wings of Ragreed let out crackling sparks.

'Back wings booster damaged□□it's judged to be unable to be used for long time.'

"Chih.....!"

Ragreed confirmed the deterioration of his booster's function from El Fajura's voice.

Philuffy's aim was the booster in the back wings.

Because Typhoon was a land battle type, it was unsuited to hold back flying enemies.

But, the calculation was that if she could just took away the wings of the supreme commander Ragreed, the rebel army and Abysses at the surrounding would also inevitably get held in place in order to protect him.

Ragreed who noticed that clicked his tongue while gazing at Philuffy in front of him. His eyes opened wide as though he noticed something.

".....Hah. Just when I think who is this, it's the dim-witted daughter of Aingram conglomerate who came to the imperial court at the past. It has been seven years huh? Are you planning to take revenge from me?"

"....."

Ragreed recalled his memory and asked like that, but it was as though Philuffy didn't react at all.

"I heard that a part of Abyss was planted into you it seems. Kukukukuku, you're a monster whose half inside isn't human anymore. Hahahaha! What a great mess! Surely even that ruined prince is also despair□□"

"I remember you know? About that time."

Philuffy muttered as though to interrupt Ragreed's provocation.

"That time, Lu-chan didn't think of himself, like the two of you. He was really sad, saying that he couldn't help me skillfully."

She spoke indifferently with her usual expressionless look.

However, she continued with a clear tone.

"I was happy he helped me. But, because of my fault Lu-chan got sad, that made me really pained too so□□"

After showing just a slightly lonely look, she stared ahead with a straightforward gaze that was filled with strong will.

"That's why, I won't let you anymore. I will□□defeat you."

Ragreed frowned seeing those eyes and stance that had not the slightest hesitation in it, and then he laughed.

".....Hah! Just try it you monster! What can you do against this number with just you alone!"

Ragreed lifted up his Blade high and gave the command to attack.

Right after that, fifty Drag-Knights behind him and the Abysses on the sky started moving.

Part 17

At the arena's ring.

In front of the door of the conference room at the second floor inside the castle.

And then in front of the front gate of the castle. Around the time the battles started at those places.

Above Gigas that came to a stop just a few hundred mel until the palace, a mortal combat was unfolding.

On the balcony located at Gigas's right shoulder, the duel of Lisha versus Hayes was being carried out.

Lisha was firing her throwing weapons the Legion to hold back her opponent while using the Seven Heads that she equipped by using supplemental equipment transfer aiming to fire a bombardment, but her attack was altogether deflected by the two-

bladed sword Hayes handled, she was completely held back.

Even so Lisha was still calm, she kept shooting her Legion one shot at a time.

"You got cold feet? With that kind of attack, I won't even need to use Nidhogg's Divine Raiment you know?"

Hayes closed the distance bit by bit while showing a fearless smile and talked in provocation.

But, in contrast Lisha kept glaring quietly at Nidhogg as though she wasn't budging even an inch.

"You're wrong□□. A bit more."

And then, she whispered faintly like that with an expression as though she was heightening her focus.

"Or else, are you perhaps trying to buy time until your friend come to help? □□You incompetent."

Hayes's Nidhogg that was being held back by Breath Gun suddenly accelerated and drew near.

She slashed at Tiamat as though striking using her two-bladed sword that possessed two blades at the opposite ends.

"Kuuh.....!?"

Lisha barely blocked using her barrier, but a part of her armor chipped due to the impact that pierced through.

After Lisha took further distance to the back, the sky was right behind her.

"What's up? Aren't you the princess who possess both talents as researcher and Drag-Knight? Looks like that's just excessive flattery by this peace idiots country huh!"

Hayes floated a faint grin. In response Lisha let out a sigh.

"Certainly, that might be an excessive title for me. □□But"

Lisha whispered in self-deprecation like that while pulling out her Sword Device.

And then, she quickly swung it and pointed at Hayes.

"I haven't fallen that low that I need someone like you to worry about me!"

Two Legions were fired at the same time with that yell.

The two armaments that approached in high speed were deflected by the two-bladed sword, it was at that moment something unusual happened.

".....What-!?"

Another Legion that was hiding in the shadow of the second Legion hit Nidhogg and sent it flying backward.

It was a concealed shooting(Hide Shot) by making use of Legion that was a throwing weapon with physical substance.

Lisha accurately grasped the opponent's line of sight and positioning and made her attack succeeded using advanced technique where accurate trajectory manipulation was indispensable. At that moment, the cannon Lisha readied had its trigger pulled and it fired.

Right after that, the shot impacted Nidhogg that had its movement stopped and its frame was enveloped in flame.

Part 18

At the other balcony of Gigas's shoulder that was several times larger than a large type warship□□.

There Lux and Yoruka's duel was unfolding.

Every single one of the high speed slashes that were unleashed in

rapid succession aimed at the vital spots. Even Lux found it difficult to defend.

In addition, the Divine Raiment of Yato no Kami that Yoruka wore the Spell Code that could steal control from other Drag-Ride, it would be strengthened in its controlling strength and the span of time it stole control in proportion with the length of time it touched the opponent.

Not to speak of locking sword for several seconds, even being touched by Yato no Kami would invite danger.

Furthermore, even when Lux tried to use Quick Shot using the reinforcement of time compression from Bahamut's Reload on Fire, he was unable to predict Yoruka's attack preparatory movement at all.

Quick Shot would decelerate the time of one's own body by several times first before activating, because of that at the beginning it would leave out an opening. It couldn't be used without being able to see through the opponent's attack preliminary movement first.

Right now Lux was still able to continue defending against Yoruka's attack just barely, but that was the best that he could do.

"As expected from Aruji-sama. This is the first time there is someone who can evade my sword this long. But"

The slash of Yoruka who was showing a composed smile increased further in speed and weight.

"Is it fine like this? The current Aruji-sama doesn't have that much time left until you cannot fight anymore correct?"

"Kuh.....!?"

Yoruka's tone that sounded like she had seen him through caused Lux to feel impatient.

The operation time limit of Bahamut was approaching moment by moment even while they were doing this.

Yoruka's exquisite swordsmanship wasn't something he could ascertain in this short time.

Therefore Lux resolved to throw away safety.

"Then□□I'll make you let me pass."

The moment Lux declared, Bahamut's great sword drew a slashing line with speed that eye couldn't follow.

It was the super speed activation for one action only by completely harmonizing body control operation and mind control operation□□Quick Draw.

The attack that came from the Drag-Ride control technique that Lux devised in the past, when it hit the shoulder of Yato no Kami□□that instantaneous attack clashed with the slash Yoruka unleashed and fierce sound and sparks scattered.

"Wha-.....!?"

Lux who saw that was shocked. He quickly flew backward and took some distance.

Quick Draw's attack shouldn't be able to get overtaken by normal Drag-Ride operation even when they reacted.

That movement that he had seen only once before at Cross Field was as expected□□.

"Truly splendid Aruji-sama. It's only to be expected from someone who had devised this hidden technique as well as the remaining other two earlier than me isn't it?"

"Eh.....?"

Yoruka suddenly showed an innocent smile and told Lux so.

"The great figure who was the youngest Drag-Knight of Arcadia Empire and devised special control techniques that ought to even be called as three type of hidden technique. The true identity of that person wasn't known until now but□□I can understand with this."

"....."

Lux was speechless hearing those matter-of-fact words.

If Yoruka was speaking the truth, she too was also able to use the three hidden techniques just like Lux.

(□□No good. This girl's strength far surpass my imagination.)

But, there was no time for him to hesitate.

Lux kept taking distance while concentrating his mind. He readied his great sword.

The second hidden technique□□Recoil Burst.

By creating contradiction of holding down a full power body control operation with mind control operation that was focused into one point, this hidden technique of destruction would unleash an attack that was impossible to control from an intentional rampage.

The armor's Mythrildite raised a strange creaking sound. That sound could be heard from Bahamut and Yato no Kami.

(□□Yoruka is also doing Recoil Burst!? Is she planning both of us taking each other down simultaneously!?)

giggle A small chuckle leaked out from Yoruka's mouth. Right after that, the blades of both sides that were unleashed as though there was an explosion behind them crossed while grazing each other.

The slash was unleashed so that both sides would dodge just barely, but that terrific might blew away both Drag-Rides just from the shockwave of the aftermath.

"Ku.....aa!"

Lux endured the recoil from the attack that was strengthened until more than ten times while rushing so to not miss that opening.

The third hidden technique, End Action.

It was a special move where a Drag-Knight could infinitely launch consecutive attack without end by alternately stacking operation command of body control operation and mind control operation that was independent from each other. Lux executed the technique with the resolve to decide the match before Yato no Kami's Spell Code was activated but□□,

"My□□so this time it's a contest of endurance?"

The slashes that were unleashed without pause over and over were all returned blow by blow with exactly the same sword speed by Yoruka too.

Upper slash, low slash, thrust, return slash, repel, dodge, parry.

The sharpness of the sword flashes was gradually increasing, accelerating in high speed as though all the other awareness was cut loose.

When more than a hundred slashes were crossed and repelled in the span of a few seconds, their arms and legs finally stopped.

"Haa, haa.....haa.....!"

"Haa, a.....haa....."

Because they were unleashing slashed with any pause in a state of not breathing, they both ran out of breath and stopped moving.

"□□It's not so easy to defeat you Aruji-sama. There were several chances if I aimed for a simultaneous defeat but..... I too still cannot die."

Yoruka smiled with her shoulders heaving up and down. Her breathing was rough without even any composure to hide her exhaustion.

Lux who was similarly lacking the composure had a question coming to his mind after hearing those words and he asked back.

".....What do you, mean?"

"Because after this, I have to raise Aruji-sama's younger sister to become a king in Aruji-sama's place."

Yoruka said that with a matter-of-fact tone.

She said that if Lux died, she would raise Airi who would be the last remaining bloodline of the old empire as king.

".....Why are you that fixated to the old empire? No matter because you promised□□"

".....How about we have a bit of talk about the past?"

Yoruka said that and started talking quietly about it.

"Just as I said before this, I am a defective article. I don't have human heart since I was born. A heartless doll that lacked humanity. Even when my father told me that and cut off our familial relationship, I didn't feel a single thing."

Yoruka who was the princess of the nation of Koto and her younger twin brother.

Her little brother was sickly but a person of character, in contrast to him Yoruka continued to instinctually kill the hostile who attacked her and she was avoided by all her surrounding.

"It was only my sickly little brother who was concerned of me who was shunned by everyone in the castle. Inside the castle that was like a rubbish heap where every single person only thought of kicking down other person, it was only my little brother who tried to become a splendid lord. He even spoke that he would surely protect me who wasn't understood by anyone□□"

Lux wondered why.

Yoruka's little brother whose face he didn't even know, felt the same like Lux who tried to change the old empire from the inside.

"We swore. My little brother would become a splendid lord. And I would become a servant who devotes my loyalty to my little brother who would succeed the throne. Both of us would risk our

life to protect the other, and persisted on our respective path until the end. And then□□"

Yoruka suddenly put her breathing in order, twisted half her body, and readied her katana shaped Blade in middle stance.

"Now then, let's end this soon. Next I will display my own personal sword. This left eye□□that has been strengthened from having the operation called 'Baptism'conducted on it, enabled this technique□□"

The pupil of Yoruka's left eye suddenly opened and it was tinged with bewitching purple light.

Lux put up his guard against the uncommon presence, but right at that moment, it happened.

zagu-!

"Wha□□!?"

When Lux heard the sharp sound of slicing wind, he was already cut.

Bahamut's barrier that was deployed before his eye was slightly torn, a part of his armor was broken, and an impact pierced Lux's body.

"Instant Strike□□perhaps that's how I should name it? It doesn't has that much power, but if it's a Drag-Ride that only has average armor then it will take only one strike you know?"

"U....., kuh!?"

Lux immediately took distance from Yoruka and grasped the situation.

(.....Just now, what did she do!?)

The speed of the Blade that Yoruka slashed was indeed fast.

But, its speed was obviously inferior to his hidden technique

Quick Draw, and her swordsmanship just now also wasn't particularly unusual.

And yet, it was as though Lux was unable to see that slash that should be extremely simple.

"Human, cannot do something like being conscious of the unconscious."

Yoruka talked matter-of-factly while closing the distance.

The pupil of her left eye stayed open while shining blazingly with mysterious light, a gruesome smile surfaced on her face.

When Lux noticed, he was receiving the second attack.

Lux concentrated trying to at least ascertain that sword flash, but he was unable.

"What is called consciousness is the same like breathing. No matter how much someone tried to focus, there surely will be an instant where they paused. If I attack at that moment□□it will feel like the attack is visible but the opponent won't be able to react."

"Gu, ah.....!"

Lux received the slashes Yoruka unleashed one after another and his Drag-Ride's output was rapidly decreasing.

The moment his balance suddenly broke, Yoruka unleashed a slash as though she was aiming for that and he received it in full. He was sent flying.

(Damn, it.....!)

"When using Aruji-sama's hidden techniques and Instant Strike, I need to focus so I cannot use my Divine Raiment but□□the attack just now was different you know?"

"Ku, a.....!"

Mysteriously shining cursed pattern was surfacing on Bahamut's

armor.

Due to the ability of Yato no Kami's Divine Raiment, Spell Code, Bahamut's control was taken away.

The power of that Divine Raiment gave stronger domination the longer the opponent was touched, but facing against an opponent as skilled as Yoruka, even a single second of opening would be fatal.

Bahamut's movement stopped and even the barrier deployment was dispelled.

The instant Lux became completely defenseless, Yoruka swung up her Blade with a smile.

"-.....!?"

(□□She got me)

That moment when Lux resolved himself, Yoruka's sword quickly moved. With his gaze kept facing the front, two throwing weapons flying from behind him deflected that attack.

Right after Lux noticed that it was the cover fire from Lisha's fired Legion□□,

"Uwah!?"

Two more Legions hit Bahamut's shoulders and blew Lux backward.

"I see, so that's her aim."

Right after Yoruka smiled, the effect of Spell Code was dispelled because a distance was opened from her.

'Get a hold of yourself Lux! Why are you having trouble facing against that kind of person!'

The Dragon Voice from Lisha became blurred from the middle.

Looking there, far away at the other side of Gigas, Lisha was

receiving fierce attacks from Hayes who was wearing Nidhogg.

Part 19

Hah! Exposing an opening to save that shitty prince, you made an awful mistake!]

Hayes laughed loudly while doubling her attack, but Lisha endured stoically.

Although she once built advantage against Nidhogg, but in order to save Lux she used Legions. Hayes took advantage of it and the battle situation was reversed once more.

Because Tiamat was a Drag-Ride that possessed a lot of armaments for long range, it was weak when the enemy got close.

But, the glint of Lisha's eyes didn't weaken even slightly even while she was getting cornered into a disadvantageous situation.

"Mistake you say? Are you talking about me?"

"That's right. How can someone standing above other people get done in from covering for their subordinate's life? Because you don't even understand something like that you'll□□"

"It's you who don't get it, you damn wannabe strategist!"

GAKII!

The two-bladed sword Hayes swung got through the barrier. But the Sword Device Lisha pulled out blocked it and using Howling Howl, Nidhogg was pushed back.

".....What-!?"

That unexpected defense shook Hayes. It was then Lisha swiftly swung her Sword Device.

Countless Legions were circling around Nidhogg like a tornado, cutting off the path of escape. Lisha pulled the trigger of Seven

Heads.

"Gu, AAAAH!"

The barrier of Hayes's Nidhogg was smashed through and a part of her armor broke apart.

Hayes couldn't hold out and fell on her knee. Lisha readied her weapon once more.

"You said that I'm weak. But, how can you lose than against that me? No one was telling it to you. You put Ragnarok and this Gigas, things that no one can be a match against under your control, and you got deluded that all these are your own strength just from that. But, I'm different from you! That guy remonstrated me who was conceited of my own strength. That's why the current me is here because I had piled up hard work, wanting to be recognized by that guy!"

Hayes was crouching in front of the pointed cannon muzzle.

"Ku, kukukukuku....."

Her lips were distorted into a fearless grin.

Part 20

The duel of Krulcifer versus Greifer was continuing in the arena.

Thanks to Fafnir's Divine Raiment, Wise Blood that was the ability of future foresight, Krulcifer was avoiding Greifer's fierce offensive, but at the same time she was also unable to find a decisive chance.

"You're really something huh! It's a waste of your skill that you appeared as borrowed thing of your allied country yeah!"

"I also think that you will be even more troublesome if you are just a bit more prudent, it will be at the level that I won't be able to manage."

Greifer's Tail Blade lengthened its blade and attacked by drawing a strange trajectory.

That consecutive attack that was unleashed with rapidly increasing power and precision was evaded by Krulcifer using her mobility and Auto Shield.

Even so, because of Greifer's Divine Raiment, the invincibility ability□□Photon Dive, Krulcifer's counterattack was all neutralized.

Therefore, both sides didn't have the deciding factor and the battle was prolonged, but□□,

".....I wonder if you can withdraw soon? I also don't have much free time."

"Is it about that huge thing approaching this way?"

Greifer kept his gaze on his opponent Krulcifer while replying like that with a fearless grin.

"If you understand than restrain yourself. Continuing further than this is meaningless."

"Doing that caused things with old empire to get vague for many years. Unfortunately this is order from above yeah."

"It looks like the intention of my words is not conveyed to you isn't it?"

Krulcifer who heard that let out a small exasperated sigh.

And then, she gazed quietly at Greifer and informed him with a calm tone.

"Fighting more than this will end with your defeat□□that's what I'm saying."

"What.....?"

"You don't notice? You have lost once to Lux-kun. At that time, the weak point of your Divine Raiment was identified."

"Fuh, that's interesting yeah! I got curious now, just how confident you are in that!"

Greifer dashed and attacked fiercely. Krulcifer evaded while sniping with Freezing Gun. Greifer instantly activated Photon Dive and reflected back the freezing bullet that hit him.

"It's pointless! At this state, nothing will get through at me."

"Kuh.....!"

Krulcifer who kept evading like that was cornered to the wall and when she couldn't continue backing away,

"Soon□□it will be time for your invincibility to end isn't it?"

Krulcifer stopped escaping and dodging and stood her ground.

"I see, so you really believe that my Photon Dive only get seven seconds in it huh?"

".....!?"

Until now Greifer showed that his Divine Raiment's effect of invincibility would stop at precisely seven seconds.

That fact itself was a trap Greifer laid out.

In order to bring down Krulcifer who shifted into offense aiming at that moment when the effect was cancelled□□.

"The loser is you, young lady of Ymir."

The Tail Blade that was filled with energy to the maximum was deflected once by the Auto Shield, then the returning blade attacked Krulcifer.

But,

"□□No, it's as I thought. It's you who lose."

At that time, the muzzle of Fafnir's Freezing Cannon was already pressed on Cuelebre's shoulder.

BANG! The sound of a normal bullet hitting was echoing inside the arena's ring.

Right after that, Cuelebre that was clad in Photon Dive was sent flying backward. At the same time, its Divine Raiment and reinforced barrier were dispelled and decreased in output.

"Wha, aat-.....!?"

"What I'm measuring isn't the timing when your Divine Raiment's invincibility cut off. But how to make my attack hit when you're in that state□□. Thinking back it's a simple thing. If all material and energy are deflected when you are clad in that light, your own attack too should only push back your opponent instead of hitting."

Krulcifer was informing the shocked Greifer with her usual cool smile.

"In other words, anything that attack you will be ineffective unless it's an attack that is done with certain mass and speed. That's why, if I shoot in zero distance with my gun muzzle glued on you, even the light of invincibility covering your Drag-Ride can be broken through. If I readied my gun muzzle the moment you rushed in convinced of your victory□□"

"What a.....woman. So you made me think that you are aiming at the moment my invincibility run out was□□intentional huh. I must be losing my touch."

"It's not something that you should feel that down about. Your Drag-Ride also still has that damage from Lux-kun, also I was told about your Divine Raiment so I had the time to prepare countermeasure. And then□□"

Krulcifer whisperd while fixing the aim of her rifle on Cuelebre again.

"It was him who gave advice to me who was lacking a trump card against the powerful. If I drive in impact aiming at the dead center of Force Core, then even when it only hit from across the armor, it can stop the energy output of Drag-Ride temporarily."

As though following Krulcifer's words, the Freezing Cannon that was aimed at Greifer was focusing bluish white light of cold wave.

If she was unable to obtain instantaneous high offensive power, she would surpass it with her accuracy.

That was the answer that Krulcifer reached based on Lux's advice.

"I don't know how our next fight will go, but for the time being this match is my and his victory."

Krulcifer said that calmly and pulled her weapon's trigger.

That moment, the conclusion in the arena was settled quietly.

Part 21

Inside the castle at the reception hall in front of the conference room, countless light bullets and blades were flying about.

The three Drag-Rides that were planted with the seed of Yggdrasil. Horn flute was played to strengthen them.

The grotesque Drag-Rides that were called B-blood were pushing back Celis's Lindwurm.

Inside the complicated structure inside the castle where countless marble pillars were standing, Celis's option in fighting was extremely limited.

Her special armament, the huge assault lance, Lightning Lance was too big to be wielded freely indoor, and Starlight Zero that fired light bullet of wide range destruction was impossible to even be used here.

Therefore she was forced into a one-sided defensive battle against the teamwork of Sania, Egnid, and Kirly.

"What's wrong Celistia! Can you still call yourself as a Drag-Knight of a prestigious noble family like that!?"

The Blade of Saniya's B-blood Wyvern sharply slashed through, furthermore her other hand pulled the trigger of Breath Gun and attacked further with rapid-fire.

Holding a Blade and a Breath Gun in her left and right hands, she continued to attack without pause. That style of hers was the same like in the past, but her skill and power were far increasing than in the past.

Furthermore the support of Egnid who was wearing Wyrn and Kirly who was wearing Drake that were similarly B-blood allowed them to completely grasp the initiative of the battle.

"Kuh.....!"

Celis was sent flying by the impact and crashed on the stone wall inside the castle. She groaned faintly.

Saniya who was convinced of their superiority slackened the tension in her lips there into a smile.

"With this□□my dear wish will finally come true. All of you will be defeated and put under the rule of our Heiburg. All of you who are standing above other people only because of your lineage, but from now on the time has come for you to be the one to obey us!"

"Is that your objective? You take part in this plan for the sake of something like that?"

When Celis asked that, Saniya exposed her rage.

"You who were born from the house of a great noble won't understand, about us who were used by them and had our everything snatched away! My life will start from here! I will stand on the top of this country, and then I'll make all you bastards pay what you owe us without fail!"

"Is that so□□but, I reject that."

In respond to Saniya's words, Celis slowly stood up and took a stance with her lance.

"I understand your circumstance but, that kind of wish is pointless. You only want to torment other people with weaker position than you, just like what happened to yourself in the past. □□There is no way I can let such wish be accomplished."

"Fuh, that's what I thought you would say. Do it! Egnid! Kirly!"

Saniya grinned fearlessly and called out to her two subordinates.

The three Drag-Rides simultaneously attacked Celis all at once.

"If it's the me of the past, I will surely be shaken by your words. I will wonder whether my action is really correct. Whether the current rule is actually just the same like the rule of the old empire in the past□□but"

But, Celis's eye glint wasn't wavering at all.

Instantly, Lindwurm's armor shined and a territory of faint light was spreading around.

".....-!?"

At the same Celis rotated a Dagger in the air. She accurately thrust at the butt of its handle and fired it like hammering a nail.

"□□□□"

Saniya who saw that movement instantly guessed what was happening.

A double attack. It was Cross Fire from two directions by using Lindwurm's Divine Raiment, the Divine Gate's instant teleportation.

The strength of that special technique that only Celis could use was something that Saniya had witnessed many times.

"Damn idiot! We have prepared□□countermeasure against that!"

Saniya quickly flew backward until near the wall, threw away her Breath Gun and readied her Blade with two hands.

The countermeasure was to limit the directions she needed to be on guard against by making it impossible to attack her from behind.

With the strengthened barrier of B-blood Wyvern, she could repel the Dagger flying to her from the front.

Next if she could just drive away the lance attack, Egnid and Kirly would take advantage of the opening□□but,

"Crossing□□Multi Attack."

Celis appeared in the space right before her eyes, at the same time her lance that was tinged with electricity lunged diagonally downward.

And then, the Dagger that she was throwing just now, the Dagger that was similarly tinged with electricity, its tip hit the same spot of the lance's target.

It was an attack focused to one spot from two directions that was done with a flawless timing.

After receiving Lux's advice in the training camp, Celis devised this new tactic by herself.

"Gu, AAaAAH!"

The impacting attack easily pierced through the Wyvern's barrier that was strengthened by Yggdrasil's ability and the readied Blade, furthermore even its Force Core was pierced and destroyed.

"What-.....!?"

Even Egnid who was trying to attack from behind stopped moving seeing that unimaginable result.

"□□□□"

Celis finished Saniya and turned around, then in a flash she aimed her lance at Egnid before firing a Dagger wrapped in electricity once more.

Staying on guard against the Crossing Multi Attack just now□□the attack that focused its hit on one spot, Egnid resolved himself to block it.

He poured all his energy into his barrier, strengthened it to maximum, and deployed it facing the front, but,

"□□That's a bad move."

"Whaa-.....!?"

Using Divine Gate, Celis circled behind Egnid this time, launched a thrust of her lance that was tinged with electricity, and smashed apart the armor of B-Blood Wyrm.

"Gahah.....!? Bi, bitch□□that's just, cheating.....right?"

It was Cross Fire attack from two directions of back and front, right after she showed the Crossing Multi Attack that was an attack that focused on one spot simultaneously from two directions.

Pressed with two options that would result in his instant defeat if he chose mistakenly, even Egnid was tragically defeated.

"Winning percentage is sharply reduced□□retreating."

The remaining Kirly activated her B-blood Drake's camouflaging and began escaping, but Lindwurm that circled right in front of her eyes smashed the armor with one lance attack.

"□□Escape is not permitted. I'll have you receive a slightly painful experience too."

BASHiIII-!

Blinding electricity spark scattered and Kirly's mask slowly fell.

Behind the mask, there was the face of a little girl with special trait of ears that looked like bird feather.

"Second clone□□serious damage."

Kirly whispered while at the same time her body crumbled into sand□□no, into something powder-like that was even more minute than sand.

From her heart area, a mechanical lump that had countless steel wire growing from it spilled out and in the end only her head retained its shape.

"This is.....what in the world!? Your true identity is□□"

Right after Celis reflexively raised her voice, something strange occurred.

"Kukukukukukukukukukukukukukuukukukekekekekekekekekekkekeke

The head of the girl who until now persisted in her artificial silence started laughing like a broken record.

And then, the Automato borrowed Hayes's words and muttered something terrifying.

Part 22

"What is happening!? Why is she not defeated even with this much battle strength!? The enemy is just a single Drag-Ride!"

On the other side, at the plaza in front of the castle gate, it was a battle between Philuffy's Typhoon versus the swarm of Abyss and fifty Drag-Knights of rebel army Ragreed was leading.

It was a battle that started in a condition that should be advantageous for the rebel army Ragreed was leading.

The battle that seemed to be all but a victory for them was disturbed by Typhoon that Philuffy was driving with control technique that was interweaved with martial arts. The battle situation was gradually inclining to her side.

Against the enemy's long range sniping, Philuffy would use Pile Anchor to pull in Abyss and made them into shield, or she would throw them and reduced the number. Furthermore if she was

surrounded, she would shot her wire into the ground or the castle wall and moved herself in high speed.

Furthermore her straight punch with all her weight behind it and her various kicking technique that would suddenly come flying would smash apart the enemy along with their weapon without giving them any time to react, burying them onto the ground.

"□□Biting Flare(Dragon Bite Bursting Fire)"

The last Abyss, a Chimera was seized by Typhoon, and with its special armament the Chimera was blown up while still being seized.

The remaining Drag-Knights of the rebel army who saw that raised fearful voice and backed away.

"□□This, bunches of dullard-!"

Ragreed was enraged seeing hiss fearful subordinates and spat out in irritation. But even the few who escaped were seized by Typhoon's Pile Anchor and they were easily shot down.

"How, how can you fight like that!? You fight alone continuously using Divine Drag-Ride, why aren't you breathing hard!?"

"Because, Lu-chan taught me."

Philuffy told the yelling Ragreed the answer seriously.

"I became tired from fighting, because I put too much strength."

Even at the academy, Philuffy was among the top class powerful people there, but her unique fighting style that incorporated martial arts consumed a lot of stamina within short time.

Therefore through mock battle Lux taught Philuffy the way to relax even in the middle of battle□□she would constantly tense a part of her consciousness while also looking for timing to rest her body. She learned it and carried out in actual practice.

"Hah, just a pointless struggle! You think making such effort

would actually bear fruit? If your true shape as someone who has a part of Abyss inside you is brought to the open, you won't have any place to belong anywhere in this country! Your solitude fighting won't be rewarded at all!"

Right after that, Ragreed took out a horn flute from his pocket and blew into it strongly.

The discordant chord resounded through the plaza in front of the castle, right after that Philuff's face grimaced slightly.

"-.....!?"

"You get it now, damn monster! Become skewered meat just like that!"

Philuffy split her focus in order to oppose the domination effect from the horn flute. In that moment Ragreed's EX Wyvern soared, then swoop down with his great sword at the ready.

He fully used the flying device on his back wings that he preserved until now and violently assaulted Philuffy who couldn't take her stance, at that moment□□,

"□□Missing Faith."

Philuffy's eyes were dyed jet black with slight tinge of gold light.

GAUNN! Typhoon's armor shined and a jet black wave was emitted to the surrounding.

".....Wha, aattt!?"

It was Typhoon's Divine Raiment that neutralized other Drag-Ride's Divine Raiment and lowered the power output of Drag-Ride itself.

The output of Ragreed's EX Wyvern decreased the moment that wave of howl dashed over it and its speed fell.

Right after that, Typhoon's straight punch that was lying in wait struck the EX Wyvern.

"Gu, GAAaaAH!"

The impact pierced the barrier and crushed the armor.

Ragreed spat out blood and he was sent flying far away behind, crashing onto the closed castle gate.

"Gehoh....., ho, how.....can you maintain your sanity? My horn flute, certainly□□"

"Because, I keep training. Since then, Lu-chan and Airi-chan always, trained me with that."

The eyes of Philuffy who was whispering that indifferently had already returned to her usual eyes.

"It's not pointless. Because from here on, I'll protect Lu-chan."

It was a training to accustom the body, in order to endure the horn flute's control.

Although there was limit at the time and number she could endure, the training was continued periodically so that she would at least be able to maintain herself as much as she could.

Therefore, it was possible for Philuffy to Abyssification herself by her own will although it would only be for a short period of time.

Of course it was a trump card that would put burden on her body, but in that short time she would be able to activate Typhoon's Divine Raiment that originally she was unable to use while her physical ability would also increase by leap and bound.

"That's, impossible.....! Something, like hope, for you is....."

Ragreed's head dropped down and he fainted.

Philuffy who saw that leaked out a relieved sigh, but at that moment, a strange voice could be heard.

'Kukukukukuku□□how admirable to defeat two bodies of the facility's Gear Leader who is my compatriot and resist until this

far. But, don't think that you are in advantage with this, you lowlifes.'

".....What's, this?"

The shining powder flaking off from the EX Wyvern Ragreed was wearing took the shape of human face and started talking.

It copied the expression of the strategist Hayes grinning fearlessly.

"This□□don't tell me"

Airi who was hiding together with Noct's Drake near the castle gate saw that and groaned reflexively.

'I'll at least show you the prize for resisting my plan until this far. The destruction of this country that is!'

UUUN! Instantly, Gigas that was visible far away at the capital's townscape radiated light and the ground was starting to shake like earthquake.

"Lu.....chan?"

Philuffy whispered anxiously, at the same time she fell on her knee from exhaustion.

Part 23

"Gigas is vibrating.....!? What are you planning to do, Hayes!"

Nidhogg stood up taking advantage of when Lisha's attention was diverted by the loud rumble.

Lisha who saw that reflexively pulled her Cannon's trigger.

But, when Hayes swung her two-bladed sword that was tinged with light as though drawing a circle, a wall of light was created before her and blocked Lisha's cannon shot.

No□□strictly speaking it wasn't a wall.

The light of Nidhogg's Divine Raiment was transmitted through two-bladed sword and tinged the blade□□turning into a light blade that cut apart everything, the trajectory that blade passed would leave behind cut section.

"□□It's futile. No one is able to pass through the cut section this thing created. And then, eat this!"

Next Nidhogg swept its weapon sideways. Just by doing that, the flash from it diagonally severed the upper part of the castle that was far behind. The castle crumbled down.

"Wha-.....!?"

"This is your fault you know, damn substitute. To use this□□Nidhogg's Divine Raiment, Astral Line, even I will need to resolve myself. After all it's a Divine Raiment that split apart space itself, it's an article that might destroy even this Gigas and the treasure I want to snatch."

Hayes laughed seeing Lisha shuddering from witnessing that terrible might.

"See, I'm good with just killing you guys, the top of the royalty in the capital. Beheading everyone will make it troublesome for controlling this country later, it will also prolong the chaos. But□□I gave up holding back already. Using Nidhogg's Divine Raiment and Gigas's all-direction firing, I'll blow up everything altogether along with this capital!"

"Are you sane.....? You□□"

"It's the fault of you guys for making me angry! You can go to hell without worry! Cause you'll go together there with the people of this new kingdom that you try to protect!"

Hayes yelled while Nidhogg swung down the blade that was tinged with the light of its Divine Raiment once more.

The flash of Astral Line split the world vertically, from the sky to the ground.

"-.....!?"

Lisha's body was blown away along with one arm of Tiamat that immediately deployed reinforced barrier.

Part 24

A moment later, even Lux and Yoruka who were standing at the opposite side could hear that abnormal sound of slicing wind.

Due to the Divine Raiment Astral Line that severed the very space itself, the capital's clock tower along with the city below were severed and collapsed with thunderous sound.

The Gigas was quickening the gathering of faint light toward its central cannon muzzle and on its whole body. The aftermath of the vibration from it shook the ground.

While scream and shriek could be heard from below, Lux who was on his knee lifted his face.

"□□It looks like that side will also be concluded soon isn't it?"

Yoruka was approaching near with a composed look even now after witnessing the omen to destruction that Gigas was showing and Nidhogg's attack.

Although Lux was saved from his predicament due to Lisha's support, he was unable to find a conclusive mean of survival.

Lux had no method to block Yoruka's special move□□the Instant Strike that took advantage of the gap of consciousness.

There was less than three minutes left for the activation time limit of Bahamut.

He was completely□□cornered.

"Are you.....not scared? Even though that Gigas and Hayes might destroy this capital soon."

"Yes, not at all. Because I don't have any human emotion in me."

Yoruka answered instantly while showing a carefree smile.

"But, this is curious. Aruji-sama too doesn't look scared at all. Aruji-sama is seriously intending it isn't it□□of saving this country."

".....What happened with your little brother?"

"Yes?"

"Your little brother swore to succeed the throne of Koto and become a splendid lord. And then, you□□swore to walk the path of a servant who will protect him, what happened to that?"

"In this kind of situation, Aruji-sama is asking interesting thing isn't it?"

"Because I think that I have to ask it, as the last prince of the old empire."

"....."

Yoruka hesitated just for an instant with the smile still fixed on her face.

"My little brother□□was killed."

She said it smoothly from start to finish without any change at all in her expression and tone.

"Eh.....?"

"The castle was surrounded when I was going outside, so in order to save my little brother I surrendered. I obeyed the command to enter under the banner of the old empire with the condition that only my little brother's life is saved□□but"

Yoruka talked with a hint of nostalgia in her tone and she smiled.

"My little brother was already killed, by none other than his subordinates the chief vassals. The chief vassals who gave up the

war because of the difference in battle strength with the empire laid the responsibility on my little brother in order to protect themselves. They beheaded him and presented his head to the empire."

"....."

"It was, vexing."

The girl who was said to be not human whispered with something that felt like emotion coloring her tone for the first time.

"My blood relative who was the only one who believe in a defective product like me died. And yet, even when I heard that news, I didn't feel sad even a little. That's, the most vexing thing above all else, was how I wasn't a proper human until the very end."

"Then, you following the contract with my father□□with the old empire is....."

"Both of us really weren't cut out for it. Something like becoming a splendid lord, and a servant who devote her loyalty to such lord is just□□"

Even so just like her little brother who kept his oath until he died, she herself also exchanged contract with the old empire in order to save her little brother. She was attempting to be faithful until she died to the only oath she had ever sworn by protecting that contract.

"Now, the time to talk harmoniously is also over with this. Let's conclude this, Aruji-sama."

".....Got it."

Lux gazed straight at Yoruka, then he took a stance by pulling his sword greatly to the back.

"As a prince of the old empire, I'll defeat you here."

In response, Yoruka took her stance and her purple eyes shined

fierily.

The battle technique of perceiving Lux's conscious wavelength and took the opening of the unconscious gap□□Instant Strike.

Yoruka intended to settle the match using the greatest technique she had.

The surrounding atmosphere tensed tinglingly and the tension was drawn until the very limit.

A few instant later, it came.

BAKliiIN!

"□□!?"

An instant of crossing, when the blades of both sides ran through empty air, Yoruka's Blades snapped and twirled in the air.

At the same time, the Chaos Brand that Lux wielded also cracked, but it wasn't separated from his hand.

"□□Reload on Fire."

Lux's attack that struck last pierced through the barrier of Yoruka's Yato no kami and her armor was destroyed.

The impact on the Force Core completely downed the Drag-Ride's output.

"□□How.....can this be?"

Yoruka showed a color of agitation for the first time. She whispered with a dumbfounded voice.

"I don't understand something like the moment when there is gap in human's consciousness."

Lux answered with wheezing breath.

"But, I predicted it only hazily, your tendency, the omen when you are about to move after reading the gap of my consciousness. I

was finally able to see it, thanks to you getting emotional for the first time."

"....."

Lux's Quick Shot that originally should be usable only when he used Reload on Fire.

That technique which aimed to attack at the moment the opponent unleashed their attack by perfectly seeing through the attack preparation movement of the opponent, against Yoruka, it was unable to reach until her armor.

Therefore, at the first attack Lux concentrated to only brushing away her sword, and then he decided the match with the next attack.

"Certainly, my tendency will come into view if I exert my strength emotionally. What a failure. For I who am not a human□□to still have something like that."

The moment Yoruka chuckled, the Gigas shined once more and it shook fiercely along with the ground.

Right after that, from the shoulder of Gigas that was tilting diagonally□□Yoruka and Yato no Kami slipped off.

"With this, Arcadia Empire too is finished, sayonara□□Aruji-sama."

That moment she began to freefall, Lux flew his Bahamut, weaving through the gap of the broken armor that was thrown away along with Gigas's movement. And then□□,

"What are.....you doing?"

With a look as though she was something inexplicable, she stared at the hand of Bahamut that was saving her.

Lux reached out his hand in order to save Yoruka in timing where it seemed like he wouldn't make it in time at all.

Even while shaking with most of his strength used up, Lux slowly pulled up Yato no Kami.

"Aruji-sama doesn't have any responsibility or free time to save me you know? My wish is already□□"

"I once tried to change this country□□and then I failed."

Lux spoke cutting off Yoruka's words and he turned his eyes that were tinged with sadness to her.

"No matter how I couldn't believe in how the country was, so I resolved myself to change it. After that various things happened and Arcadia Empire was destroyed. My older brother, he told me that it's impossible to persuade them. Perhaps he was right. Something like my wish might be a mistake that won't come true in the end. But....."

While whispering, Lux mustered his remaining strength and pulled Yoruka up.

"If it's possible to save, then I want to save even just one more person. It doesn't matter even if that's a reckless wish. After all, I resolved myself to destroy Arcadia Empire for that."

".....I'm astonished. Something like that□□to choose the path of destroying one's own country by one's own hand in order to save it. This is my terrible misunderstanding. Aruji-sama, from the start you are fighting all this time for the sake of Arcadia Empire aren't you? In order to make it come true, the ideal country that you dreamed of□□"

Yoruka suddenly made a tranquil smile, as though she was released from something.

Like that Lux pulled up Yoruka to the edge of Gigas's shoulder before he let go of her hand.

"My battle is still not over. It has continued all this time□□since that day seven years ago. That's why, I'm going."

Lux only left those words behind and he was about to turn on his

heel. It was then he heard a voice.

".....Does Aruji-sama know, about the entrance to the shortest route heading toward Gigas's control room?"

Yoruka who dispelled her armor was looking up to Lux with her usual smile.

"I think it's a necessary information for Aruji-sama. If it can save your country, and really grant your wish then□□"

Part 25

"How long you are going to run? It won't be much long until Gigas's all-direction bombardment you know? You're planning to abandon this country huh, princess-sama."

"Kuh.....!"

Lisha barely continued to avoid fatal wound from the fierce attack that Hayes's Nidhogg unleashed by skillfully using Legion and Suppressor.

The trajectory that was passed through when the blade of Nidhogg's Divine Raiment, Astral Line was swung□□that severed cut section remained behind as wall of light. Because the space was literally cut apart like that, any attack wouldn't pass through to the other side.

(As long as the enemy don't dispel that cut section created by the Divine Raiment, my attack won't reach, huh.....)

Besides, the slash from Hayes's Astral Line could further sever that cut section of space from above.

Just like how a paper with countless lines drawn on it had a new line drawn on it and enclosed an area, Lisha's was also gradually getting cornered with her escape path getting cut off one by one.

It was a hopelessly unfavorable situation. Even so inside her head, Lisha was trying to form the strategy toward victory.

How to make her attack passed through using all the method available to her.

That was the tactical thinking possessed by Lisha who was called as the new kingdom's scarlet battle princess.

(However, thanks to seeing that Divine Raiment many times like this, I finally understand how it works.)

The moment Hayes tried to unleash slash using Astral Line again, Tiamat flew.

"Idiot! No one can fly through the space that Nidhogg cut□□.....!?"

But, the moment Hayes unleashed a new slash using her Divine Raiment, one of the walls of light from the cut space that was surrounding the area suddenly disappeared as though dissolving into air.

"You're quite something in scheming, but you are not really a big deal when it come to Drag-Ride tactic huh□□bungler strategist."

Lisha charged and slipped through that vanishing cut section□□the hole between the light walls.

The cut section of space created by Nidhogg's Divine Raiment couldn't be done infinitely by any means.

In the case when more new slash was unleashed after already cutting apart a certain size of surface area, the cut section that was previously made would vanish in turn starting from the oldest cut section.

Therefore, Lisha memorized the order by which the light wall of cut section was created, then she matched her timing with Hayes's attack and broke through the hole of the vanished wall.

Even though Hayes understood the trait of Nidhogg's Divine Raiment, she wasn't grasping it thoroughly in real battle.

That time when the difference in battle experience between the

two sides was brought to the fore, Lisha aimed her Seven Heads.

"Prepare yourself Hayes! This is□□your loss!"

"□□Hah"

But that moment, *gashiin!* Lisha together with Tiamat were restrained.

"Wh, at.....!?"

The rumbling Gigas that should be only preparing for its all-direction bombardment until now.

Its giant arm had moved unnoticed by anyone and caught Lisha with it.

"That's naïve, you substitute princess. Even if Gigas is in a state of opening all its gunport, but were you looking down on it that it won't be able to move all the time?"

"-.....!?"

"I have great power, the proof of my bloodline that once ruled over this world and made you lowlifes succumb! This is□□the status that you fake absolutely cannot obtain."

"□□That's idiotic."

Lisha raised her voice in respond to Hayes who was showing a triumphant smirk.

"What did you say.....?"

Gigas's hand was tightened until just barely, even so Lisha grinned fearlessly.

"Just what is amazing from that? I don't get it at all. Are you really satisfied that you are able to subdue a junk that will move just because of your bloodline?"

"You are still going to bluff even at this point huh, this fake

princess."

".....You see, when I obtained Tiamat, I didn't think like that for even the slightest bit. No matter how strong spec it has, I didn't want something like that for even the slightest bit. Since the past until now, what I want is the strength and qualification that is worthy for that Drag-Ride!"

Lisha put her strength into her Drag-Ride, trying to tear off Gigas's restrain.

"I'll teach you! The thing that I'm trying to obtain by fighting, is far higher in rank than your so called strength!"

"□□ That as far as your joke goes, get crushed and die."

Hayes raised an angry voice and Gigas moved to close its fist and crushed Tiamat!

But at that instant, several of its five fingers were cut apart and a jet black Drag-Ride cut through the sky.

"I'm sorry to make you wait, Lisha-sama."

Lux carried Lisha along with her Drag-Ride in his arms and spoke to her.

Lisha who became aware of that saw Lux's face from close up and her face flushed up red.

"□□!? Yo, you are slow, really! Don't make me worry so much....."

Lisha yelled angrily to divert attention from her state before she averted her face and whispered so at the end.

"Also, that girl's Divine Drag-Ride, Nidhogg, I saw through its ability. It will be sink or swim, but will you follow me?"

Seeing his master the princess pretending to be tough, Lux gently smiled at her.

"There is only little time remaining until Bahamut's activation time limit. Please instruct me your plan through Dragon Voice."

".....Yeah! We are going to teach that mad strategist a lesson!"

Lisha faced Nidhogg once more and began to focus energy into Seven Heads.

At the same time, Lux who flew drawing a sharp arc attacked toward Nidhogg.

His swordsmanship was endowed with weight and speed, but Nidhogg obstructed it with the wall its cut section created.

"It's futile! It's impossible for you to surpass this wall! You guys will absolutely□□"

"Try blocking this Hayes! The other technique that I devised!"

Immediately after Hayes who was convinced of his victory yelled, *DON!* Tiamat's armament the Seven Heads fired flickering purple light bullet from its center muzzle.

Seeing that unfamiliar attack, Hayes showed an alert expression, even so she didn't move from her spot.

Nidhogg's surrounding was already surrounded by the cut section light wall it created. No attack would pass it. In that case it should be absolutely safe if she didn't move but□□.

"Linker Burst. □□And then, Reload on Fire."

The moment Lux raised his voice, Nidhogg itself advanced forward as though it was being pulled.

"Wh, at-!?"

Bahamut was internally equipped with special armament to create force field that controlled material's trajectory. It went through compression reinforcement by Reload on Fire, and the force field that originally didn't have the strength to move Drag-Ride moved Nidhogg.



In order to prevent herself getting crushed by the light wall that her own Divine Raiment created, Hayes removed the cut section. In that instant□□the purple light bullet Lisha fired directly hit Hayes.

"Gu, u.....! Damn idiot! My Nidhogg's barrier won't even break just from this much□□"

"No worry Hayes. Your time is already over."

The moment Lisha showed her grin, it happened.

Nidhogg that received the black purple light bullet became unable to move.

No, far from that□□.

"What, this is□□!?"

Her armor creaked fiercely and began to distort in turn from the small parts.

It was as though she was being held in place by pins midair. She was fixed on the spot by a powerful pressure and she was unable to escape.

"Gravity bullet, it's a technique that applied Tiamat's Divine Raiment the Suppressor. Also once you got touched, you will get dragged at the center of the sphere until its effect run out and get crushed there. In other words□□"

Lisha was explaining while loading energy into Seven Heads.

At the same time in front of her Lux's Bahamut was silently readying its black great sword□□red flash surged.

"□□Reload on Fire."

Lux compressed his own time to the greatest degree and then he unleashed Quick Shot.

Faster than Astral Line could create light wall, that two-bladed sword that was the Divine Raiment's starting point was destroyed into pieces.

"□□Farewell Hayes, Heiburg's strategist whose identity isn't even revealed, see with your own eyes the strength of this scarlet battle princess and fall!"

Right after that, the maximum output cannon shot of Seven Heads attacked Nidhogg.

"□□Gu, GAaAAaAaAAH.....!?"

Extremely glaring light bore into the armor, then Nidhogg broke down along with Hayes's shriek.

Shriek and armor fragments scattered everywhere along with an explosion, melting inside the light.

'Wh, y.....! Why are you bastards! The like of the descendants.....who betrayed us.....!'

Hayes's voice that was sent through the Dragon Voice at the end got blurred and became distant.

When their sight returned a few moments later, Hayes's figure had vanished without any trace.

"We did it, next is□□"

Lisha moved even while wheezing roughly.

"Yes! There is only one left□□"

Mustering their last strength, Lux and Lisha followed the passage that Yoruka told Lux and infiltrated inside from Gigas's chest part. After progressing through a single path for ten-odd seconds, they found the control room area just like what they saw before inside the Ark. There, a single girl was sitting on a chair.

She had countless cables connected on her and a mechanical crown on her head, gazing to the front with emotionless eyes.

Perhaps she was splitting her focus with the control of Gigas, she moved her face for the first time when catching sight of Lux and Lisha.

"Situation of certain defeat evacuation impossible. Last order□□activate."

The Automaton's expression was hollow. But, just a single animosity could be sensed from the peculiar tone of Gigas's Gear Leader, El Fajura.

She knew of the defeat of Hayes, the Lord that she worshipped. And yet, even now she was resolved to take revenge by destroying the capital.

"Stop! The outcome is decided already. More than this is□□"

Lisha raised her voice to stop her while aiming her Cannon's muzzle at El Fajura.

But, perhaps she had used up all of her energy and willpower because Tiamat didn't show any reaction.

And then, Lux's Bahamut had also passed through its activation time limit and got dispelled.

"Damn i□□"

"Confirming situation change by sight, achieving the objective within the remaining few seconds"

El Fajura whispered while watching that movement at the corner of her sight, in that instant,

"That will be impossible I think."

stab A katana shaped Sword Device sprung out from the center of her chest, *crackle* and yellow sparks scattered.

".....!?"

When the surprised Lux and Lisha looked behind them, they noticed that Yoruka who was arriving from behind the two of them had thrown her Sword Device.

"You!!!"

Right after Lisha raised her voice in surprise, Yoruka smiled bewitchingly like usual.

"This is a contract violation Automaton-san. Destroying this very country itself is different from my agreement with your master you know?"

"....."

El Fajura didn't react to those words. She gazed at Lux with sparks scattering from her stabbed chest. And then, her lips distorted into a grin and she laughed, as though displaying her will as an Automaton for the first time.

".....I see so you are the rebel. Did you obtain the world you wished for after throwing the previously created world principle out of order?"

"What?"

Lux asked back with a dubious face after hearing the Automaton's sudden words.

"You will soon remember. Even if you are forgetting someday□□if you wish for that once more."

After leaving those words behind at the end, light vanished from El Fajura's eyes. At the same time Gigas's rumbling stopped and the surrounding was filled with silence.

The long and many battles were closed here.

Epilogue: The Empire's Whereabouts

Part 1

"We will arrive soon, Nii-san."

"N, nn....."

Lux faintly opened his eyes along with the familiar voice of his little sister Airi.

It seemed that Lux was dozing while sitting inside the neat horse carriage that was shaking sometimes.

The canopy acted as sunshade, but the inside was hot because it was midday□□and then, the scent of summer's greenery was coming in.

At this day where the last day of the summer holiday was fast approaching, Lux along with the other selection members were in a long trip back to the academy.

".....I see, it's over already isn't it."

They were delayed for ten days than their original return schedule, but thinking of the cleaning up of the great incident in the capital, the recovery and injury healing of Lux and co, and so on, it could be considered as fast.

The imperial capital recapture plan that was schemed by Heiburg's enlarged military division was safely obstructed, and the All-Dragon Battle this time had also closed its curtain.

The selection members who were the representative of each country returned back to their country, and in their place he heard that a lot of important people visited the royal capital in order to

deal in regard with the various occurring problems.

Regarding the case of the rampage of Lisha's Tiamat too, with the testimony of the captured Saniya and others, it seemed that for the moment the other countries were persuaded.

Hayes's whereabouts was unknown, but it was very likely that she died in battle with how she was defeated at the end.

Ragreed and rebel army's force that were used by Heiburg were also captured. From here on their crime would surely be inquired for a long time.

And then, at the last day before they went back.

Lux and Airi were summoned to the government office where the high officials were assembled.

"Lux Arcadia. Your conspicuous service of this time was truly splendid."

The first words of the high official who was representing the consuls were that.

The decoy role against the imperial capital recapture plan, and the four win at All-Dragon Battle.

And then, the case regarding the sudden invasion of Gigas that assaulted the royal capital and how he stopped it.

Looking at the result, Lux had completed all of the consuls' demand, and he even raised an accomplishment that far surpassed it.

"Regarding the enemies that attacked the new kingdom, your meritorious deed of commanding the members of Syvalles and managed the defense is big. Therefore□□just as promised, the matter of unauthorized Ruin investigation by headmaster Relie won't be questioned."

".....Thank you very much."

Lux lightly bowed in respond to the high official's tone of voice that was vaguely mixed with fear.

Lux had resolved himself against the possibility that they might make allusion regarding the jet black Divine Drag-Ride Lux had□□Bahamut and about the Black Hero, but unexpectedly those matters weren't mentioned.

Perhaps the queen Raffi had explained it already, or perhaps they were forbidden to question it, even Lux didn't know what it actually was but□□.

"A, and so. In regard of your exceptional achievement, we wish to grant you even more reward. The punishment given to you who were cast down as criminal along with the establishment of the new kingdom, we will recognize that you have compensated for them with your meritorious deed this time, write off that punishment, and we will lift up your status to be the same as us nobles."

The high official's words were spoken along with a flattering smile.

But even hearing those words, Lux's expression didn't change at all.

"On top of that, we of the government wish to recommend you as a Drag-Knight to be the representative of the new kingdom□□becoming one of the 『Seven Dragon Paladins』. You are not a chore prince or the like anymore. Now you can become a first class knight of the new kingdom with honor."

The surrounding consuls gave applause to their representative's words.

But at that time, the calm voice of the young man suddenly resounded inside the government office's assembly hall.

"Err, excuse me. This is a talk that is really too good for me, but I wish to decline it."

"□□What?"

It seemed that reply was completely unexpected, the representative high official showed bewilderment.

"I am satisfied with the amnesty I received from her majesty the queen, and I am even indebted to her highness the princess. And so, I□□ will be satisfied if I'm allowed to attend the academy just as before."

"Wha.....!?"

The consuls there were making a stir seeing Lux refusing like that with a calm smile.

"Wha, what are you saying!? We the representative of the new kingdom are saying here that we will pardon your crime you know!? You won't be ridiculed as the ruined prince or obligated to do chores anymore. You can become upper classes noble from your position as a criminal you know? That's□□"

"It's because my current lifestyle suits me. I wish to be allowed to work for the sake of this country's people and the academy from here on too."

Lux emphasized a part of his words slightly while giving back a smile that was free of any malice.

"Bu, but....., that's□□"

"Rather than that, if I'm able to receive some kind of reward, there is one thing that I wish to request in exchange. I don't mind to be given a request, but from here on, can I ask all of you to refrain from calling out to me through someone else in the academy?"

"Ri, right....."

"I beg you, please protect that promise."

After informing that with a cold gaze in the end, Lux left the assembly hall along with Airi.

Amidst the parliamentary seat that was enveloped in agitation, one of the four great nobles Dist Ralgris who was sitting at a corner

made a calm smile.

".....It looks like that we completely misjudged his existence."

"What do you mean by that, Lord Dist?"

One of the four great nobles, Bugriser who was sitting beside him shook his large body and asked.

"There is no other meaning. He showed how he completely outmaneuvered the consuls□□the nobles gathering here. By lifting a powerful Drag-Knight like him from his criminal status into a noble, he will become in 『debt』 with them. The government officials attempted to put a collar on him like that. Just now were these lots trying to make him into their convenient tool."

"I see. That brat saw through that miserable ulterior motive and so he refused to be freed from his criminal status."

Dist nodded at Bugriser's words.

"He is currently acquitted due to the amnesty that reduced him into the criminal status□□which put him under the management of her majesty the queen in the end. The other nobles cannot carelessly put their hand on him as long as that is the case. He weaved through the trap of the consuls here, and threatened back instead with that clever speech and achievements. All that while he is in the weakest position as a criminal."

"This means that the blood of the empire cannot be underestimated. As expected, that young man seems to also possess the disposition of 『king』. □□Perhaps it will be also quite difficult for us to make use of him at the future huh."

One of the four great nobles Zagha laughed while saying that, then he slowly walked away from that place.

After him Bugriser also stood from his seat, and Dist quietly raised his face.

"I too deliberately asked for unreasonable things to test him. But, the result is that he is actually a man that surpasses my

imagination. Then perhaps I have to ask for his cooperation quickly.
□□In order to save this country from the danger of the world."

Part 2

"Haa□□, I'm tired."

And then, finally at the night of that day. Lux returned back to the girl dormitory of the academy.

Even though originally it was a place that the male Lux shouldn't be there, right now it made him relieved to be there somehow.

"Come to think of it Lux-kun. Your new room has been arranged you know?"

"□□Is that true!?"

After hearing what Headmaster Relie told him, Lux hurriedly headed toward the room he shared with Philuffy.

Him staying there had been considered as a problem since a long time ago, but a room became empty right now because a female student moved from the dormitory into her villa, so a room for Lux alone was finally arranged.

"Lu-chan, you are leaving?"

"It, it can't be helped you know..... That's, I'll come here again to play."

Lux consoled the dissatisfied Philuffy while carrying his uniform and luggage.

He opened the door of his new room and threw himself on the lower bed of the bunk beds. Then he closed his eyes and took a breath.

"Haa, I'm glad. It's calming like this□□"

"Welcome back, Aruji-sama."

"Yep, I'm back□□wait, EEeEH!?"

When Lux noticed the voice and opened his eyes, there Yoruka wearing her usual black outfit was straddling over Lux.

"Wh, why is Yoruka□□right here!?"

When Lux raised a shocked voice, Yoruka showed that seductive smile of hers.

"It's because I noticed my misunderstanding. Aruji-sama is picturing the figure of ideal empire even now with this country, so there is not a single reason why I cannot serve you. That's why, Aruji-sama□□once more, please take care of me."

Yoruka climbed down from the bed and sat on the floor for the moment, then she bowed reverently toward Lux.

"Tha, that's great but, why are you coming to my room!? And then why are you starting to take off your clothes!?"

Lux averted his face from Yoruka who suddenly opened her black outfit bare and exposed her white breasts while he yelled with bright red face.

"I have a bit of consideration□□as I thought for the sake in case something unexpected happen, it will be for the best to leave behind a heir I believe."

Yoruka floated a bewitching smile with her cheeks slightly blushing while she drew near to Lux's body.

Sweet scent and smooth skin. And then, the softness of the fleshy body caused Lux's heart to jump.

"It seems that there is still no one among the girls around Aruji-sama who is pregnant. So I'm thinking that first, Aruji-sama should use my womb here."

"Wa, wait a second okay!? It's not like I, something like that....."

"Please rest assured. This is also the first time for me but, I have

properly learned the knowledge for it in advance."

"That's not it you know!? What I want to say isn't that□□!"

Saying that, Lux squirmed in panic. It was then Yoruka's balance broke and she fell on top of Lux.

That nicely shaped soft breasts touched the tip of Lux's nose, it was in that posture□□.

"Oi Lux! I come to play in your new room! How's it, your body's condition is□□"

"Ah.....!"

That moment, the room's door was opened and Lisha who arrived saw it.

*pikit-*Her expression stiffened and then spasmed.

"□□Just what are you doing right after changing room!? Or rather why is that exhibitionism ero woman with you!?"

"I also don't know anything-!"

The scream of Lisha who became teary eyed echoed inside the girl dormitory and the other girls were also gathering.

The last night of the summer holiday felt like it would become really long.

While the lively commotion of the girls could be heard from a room of girl dormitory.

Airi was facing the desk in her shared room by herself, staring at it with a trembling hand.

".....Just, what is this"

What was spread on the desk was a page of ancient document that was excavated from a Ruin□□the deepest part of the Ark.

Those documents where construction data of several Drag-Rides

and Ruins, also description regarding Abyss or Automaton were also found in it, all of it was given a look over before they were submitted to the royal capital.

□□The documents had been deciphered only just now. Except this last page, the page that she quietly snatched without even Headmaster Relie or Lux knowing about it.

Airi's skill in deciphering ancient document had improved until the level that wasn't that inferior compared to specialist official of the royal capital.

She didn't want to deny the result of her hard work that she had continued for many years, but only this time it was different.

If possible, she wanted to be mistaken.

Thinking like that, she redid her deciphering many times, but the answer didn't change.

What was inside the ancient document Airi deciphered was the name of the ancient imperial family members who were called as Lord(Creator) in the past.

Holy Arcadia Empire Thirteenth Generation Imperial Family's Name

First Imperial Princess Listelka Rei Arshalia

Second Imperial Princess Aeryl Vi Arcadia

Third Imperial Princess Hayes Vi Arcadia

"Why is, Arcadia's name, written inside an ancient document....."

It was unthinkable that Arcadia Empire was merely borrowing the name of an 『empire』 that existed in ancient time. (TN: There is difference between Arcadia Empire and Holy Arcadia Empire here. Arcadia Empire, the so called old empire in the raw is called Arcadia Teikoku, while the Holy Arcadia Empire mentioned in the ancient document in the raw is written Shinsei Arcadia Koukoku. One used teikoku, while the other used koukoku. The meaning is

the same, though I think koukoku has like more sacred implication.)

The reason was that the seven Ruins itself where this ancient document was excavated from, were only discovered around some ten-odd years ago. And Arcadia Empire had been reigning over this land since several hundred years ago already.

Even in the history book of other countries, there wasn't any description that seemed to refer to the seven Ruins.

If this 『empire』 and Arcadia Empire had connection between them, then there should be a description in history book that hinted at the existence of the Ruins but□□.

Then, was this just a coincidence of same name?

But, the silver hair and grey colored eye that girl called Hayes possessed.

That coincidental appearance that was only possessed by the imperial family of the old empire caused anxiety to grow inside Airi's chest.

"Then, that Arcadia Empire where we were at was□□just what are we, Nii-san....."

Airi tightly grasped the ancient document with trembling voice and body.

Those small vanishing words didn't reach anyone's ear, merely absorbed into darkness.

Afterword

Thank you very much for purchasing this volume. This is Akatsuki Senri.

I am able to reach until fifth volume of this series is thanks to everyone. It's the first time since my debut work.

Somehow recently what I need to do is increasing, covering of various things that digressed to many things. It feels really busy whether in my daily life and also in my work.

But well, human personally act with mood that is consisting from the balance of 'challenging some kind of new thing' and 'only this that must be done without fail', so perhaps this is a good thing. The problem is the balance.

And then, I think one of those will already be announced when this fifth volume come out.

Of all things, Gangan Online-sama and then GA Bunko Magazine-sama has decided to publish short story of Saijaku Muhai no Bahamut!

I think that short stories that selected the named heroines of Bahamut will be published one after another, so if you like please take a look of those too. It will make me happy if you will do so.

First is from Lux's little sister, Airi chapter! Those who have interest with the glaring little sister please read it by all means!

Let's move to the thanks corner soon.

Kasuga Ayumu-sama who drew wonderful illustrations for the fifth volume too.

Thank you very much for cutely drawing Yoruka whose scent is different even inside this series, and also for drawing the new Drag-Ride coolly.

I really like where Yoruka's hair is going curly around her eyes.

The one in charge of me Satou-sama. Thank you very much for your usual manuscript check. This time I finished the first draft quickly.

Please treat me well from now on too.

Now then, finally from the next volume the story outside the new kingdom□□the foreign country will proceed in full tilt, it will make me happy if you readers will keep this series company from here on too.

Well then!

A certain day in November 2014 Akatsuki Senri